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Composition and Communication

THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE CONFERENCE ON
COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

EDITOR

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The Freshman and His Dictionary¹

MITFORD M. MATHEWS²

When I was a small boy a carpenter once said in my presence that few workmen, even among master mechanics, knew more than a fraction of the uses of an ordinary steel square. The remark amazed me, as at that early age I thought a carpenter's square was a very simple tool. It certainly appeared so to me,—nothing more than two flat pieces of metal forming a right angle, and useful in marking a plank that one wished to saw in two in something like a workmanlike manner. True, the instrument has numerous markings and numbers on it, but I had never seen anyone making the slightest use of these, so I had concluded they might be ignored.

When I became older and found that large books have been written on the uses of the steel square, I changed my mind about the simplicity of the tool and the limited range of its usefulness. For many years as I have observed the use made of dictionaries by even good students, I have been reminded of that remark by the carpenter about steel squares.

Dictionaries are tools, and they are much more complicated, and capable of many more uses than students suspect. All of us know students need encouragement and guidance in the use of dictionaries, and perhaps there are few teachers of freshman composition but that devote a part of their program to an effort to help students form the habit of consulting dictionaries. Composition books for freshmen point out the need for instruction of this kind.

Despite what is being done, however,

¹Address at the annual luncheon, CCCC Spring Meeting, March 24-26, 1955, Chicago, Illinois.

²The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois.

the fact is easily observable that few students are able to use their dictionaries with anything like efficiency. Certainly there must be very few of those who come up through the grades these days who are not familiar with the details of looking up words in dictionaries, but it is one thing to find a word in a dictionary and quite another to understand fully the information there given about it. It seems to me that college freshmen are fully prepared for and could profit by a well-planned introduction to the larger of the English dictionaries, and an acquaintance with what they contain. Such a program might well include material of the following kinds.

1. Students should know something about the large, unabridged dictionaries to which they have ready access in college. They might well be given brief sketches of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the *English Dialect Dictionary*, by Joseph Wright, the old *Century Dictionary* (12 volumes), and the modern unabridged *Webster*. These may be called the "Big Four" in the dictionary field, and while it is certainly not anticipated that the freshman will ever provide himself with all of them, it is a cultural experience for him to become acquainted with the circumstances under which each of them was produced, and with the special excellencies each exhibits.

An acquaintance with these larger works will not only make the student aware of what kind of information about words is available in them, but it will leave him much better prepared to make efficient use of the desk-size dictionary with which he has some familiarity.

Many years ago a graduate student inconvenienced himself greatly to come a long distance to see me to ask if I could

help him secure some information about the term "poll tax." He was preparing a doctor's thesis, he told me, and needed to know how long this term had been in the language, what its basic meaning was, and what other meanings it may have had in the course of its use in English. He was most surprised when I opened the *OED* to the appropriate place and showed him that all he needed to know about this term had been available within a few feet of his desk in the school where he was studying. It is not at all likely that any but the exceptional student will ever need all the information about words that the larger dictionaries afford, but it is well worth the while of every student to become acquainted with the fact that such information is available for those who at any time need to make use of it.

It is to be hoped that in such general instruction as may be given about the different dictionaries, some emphasis will be placed on the fact that modern dictionaries do their utmost to *record* usage, not to *prescribe* it. The tendency to regard the lexicographer as a linguistic legislator is so deep-seated that it will probably never be entirely overcome. The habit of thought that is back of such expressions as "the dictionary now permits us to pronounce it thus," has been with us for a long time, and will continue. But every student should have the wholesome experience of being taught that dictionaries attempt to give commonly accepted usage, and that correctness in the use of language varies sometimes according to time and place.

2. Along with some information about the origin and scope of the large dictionaries mentioned, there should be given some elementary information about the history of the English language and the place it occupies with reference to the others of the Indo-European group. I am certainly not foolish enough to suggest that all teachers of freshman com-

position become instructors in Germanic philology. What I have in mind is nothing more detailed than could be easily covered in one, or at most two, class sessions, the overall relationships of the languages being presented briefly, with a few well chosen examples to indicate the relationship of a few of them.

The desirability of this elementary acquaintance with the linguistic position occupied by English is brought out quite clearly by Professor Pei in his *Story of Language*:

Many years ago, I was requested to tutor in French a young girl who had to take College Entrance Examinations. Knowing that she had had four years of Latin as well as three years of French, I spared no occasion in the course of the tutoring to remind her that certain French words which she had difficulty in remembering came from Latin words which she knew. For a time she took it patiently, though with a somewhat bewildered air. But one day she finally blurted out: "Do you mean to tell me that there is a connection between Latin and French?" In the course of four years of one language and three of the other, it had never occurred to any of her Latin teachers to inform her that Latin had descendants, or to her French teacher to tell her that French had a progenitor!

3. The attention usually devoted to instruction in the use of the dictionary apparently stresses spellings, meanings, and pronunciations somewhat in the order here given. Certainly these are conspicuous features of any dictionary, and it is altogether desirable for students to be encouraged to turn to these works when they are confronted with a problem of the kind indicated.

The impression, however, inevitably conveyed by instruction restricted altogether to employing the dictionary as a problem-solver, is that such a book is of no particular use unless there is a problem requiring immediate attention. Students are sorely tempted to so manipulate things as to avoid encountering problems that drive them to a diction-

ary. It is to be feared that, for many of them, the dictionary is a form of medicine to be resorted to only in time of unavoidable need. They associate it perhaps with castor oil or some other undesirable, dynamic type of cathartic. It is a most helpful thing for the student to learn that dictionaries are filled with interesting information from which one can derive much pleasure and instruction, even though he may not be confronted with an urgent problem of any kind.

Students should be encouraged to develop a wholesome curiosity about words that present no particular problem in spelling, pronunciation, or meaning. As a rule, the words we know well do not rise to the surface of our consciousness. It is only rarely that some common, everyday term forces itself upon our attention so urgently that for the first time we turn to the dictionary to see what lies back of it.

This use of the dictionary when there is no immediate, pressing need to do so, this giving attention to words we have known for a long time but have never grown curious about, is most rewarding. This kind of use of the dictionary we may think of as the labor of free men; the forced use is more properly likened to that of slaves.

On every hand there are words of fascinating backgrounds about which the dictionary has much to teach us. Certainly the name *Jesus*, that of the founder of Christianity, is well known to all those with whom you and I come in contact. Perhaps few of us have ever felt impelled to look the word up in a dictionary, or even realized that dictionaries contain it. An examination of the dictionary, however, reveals that the name his parents gave the Saviour was *Joshua*, and it was by this thoroughly Jewish name that He was known by those He lived among.

The first accounts of His life were written in Greek, and in these writings

Joshua was transliterated into *Jesus*, a name that is certainly not Jewish in its present dress and at the same time appears odd as a Greek name.

Not even a grade-school pupil is likely to be baffled by *ostrich*, but one who is allergic to words may well become curious about it. Allow it to become the focus of your attention for a moment and see how odd the word appears. Make a guess as to where you think it might have come from, and then check up on yourself by turning to the dictionary. You may be surprised, as I was, to find the word is made up of two, one from Latin and one from Greek, which have so blended as to obscure altogether the fact that the expression signifies "bird-bird" or "bird-sparrow." It is a good term to bear in mind and use upon those of our brethren who insist that only "pure English" should be used, and profess to be pained by such obvious hybrids as *cablegram* and *electrocute*.

There may be few teachers who have discovered how rewarding it is to look curiously at the scientific terms used in dictionaries in the definitions of plants and animals. These expressions are usually hurried over by most of us as being the exclusive property of scientists and of very little interest for others.

It is surprisingly interesting to linger over such terms. It is a gratifying experience to discover one that yields its significance somewhat readily. Our common mocking bird, for instance, is *Mimus polyglottos*. The ingenuity needed for deciphering this expression is possessed by all of us. *Mimic* and *polyglot* are all we need to see that our expression means "the many-tongued mimic," a fitting description of the bird in question.

In the spring when the snow has melted, and the earth is warming up from its long cold sleep, the cheerful piping notes of a very small frog begin to be heard in the woods and marshes. People call this little creature a *spring peeper*

because of the season when his little peeping notes are first heard, but scientists dub him *Hyla crucifer*. As we puzzle over this name we are likely to give up on *Hyla* for there is no other word in the English language with which we can, perhaps, associate it profitably. It has descendants among us, but we are not likely to be acquainted with them.

Crucifer though is easier. Even if we do not know that a *crucifer* is one who carries a cross, especially in a church procession, we can reason out the two elements in the word and see that it must have the meaning of one who carries a cross. Our ability to reason out this much of the scientific expression may increase our curiosity about the first element *Hyla*. Here is a helpful hint. As we all know, these scientific genus names are often from Greek. So we are reasoning sensibly when we suppose *Hyla* is Greek.

The fact is elementary that when we are confronted with a Greek word which begins with an *h*, i.e. with a rough breathing, it behooves us as cautious scouts to cast about in our minds for a possible Latin cognate beginning with an *s*. Substituting an *s* in *hyla* we come up with *syla*. Let us study *syla* a bit. It is almost a word. If we might be so bold as to in-

sert a -v- and make it *sylva* we have a word that is in our dictionary, and one we met in a slightly different form, *silva*, when we studied first-year Latin.

The little detail of why this -v- is necessary need not bother us in the slightest at this point, because we are just having fun with no idea of becoming linguists. And this is it. *Hyla* and *sylva* go together and they both mean wood or forest. Now we can interpret this *Hyla crucifer* "the (little) fellow who lives in the woods and carries a cross," and when we find that this spring peeper has a dark marking on his back shaped like a cross, we are indeed gratified that now light is shining where previously all was darkness.

A teacher who is fortunate enough to have an assiduously cultivated curiosity about words will over and over again bring to a class gleanings of unexpected sorts from dictionaries. Such sharing of treasures will do more than anything else to bring home to students the fact that dictionaries are not dull, enlarged spelling books. They are filled with such a number of things that we can never exhaust their treasures but we can all be as happy as kings as we come time after time upon interesting nuggets of the kind just mentioned.

A Course for Training Rhetoric Teachers at the University of Illinois¹

CHARLES W. ROBERTS²

In each semester for the past eight years, the Department of English at the

University of Illinois has offered Rhetoric 480, a graduate course bearing this title: The Theory and Practice of English Composition; The catalogue description of the course is as follows: "A study of the problems facing the writer and the teacher of writing at the college level."

¹A paper given at the second general session, CCCC Spring Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, March 4, 5, and 6, 1954, on the general subject, "Current Courses in the Training of the Composition/Communication Teacher."

²University of Illinois

The class meets ordinarily for two hours a week for one semester and gives a full unit of credit toward the Master's or Doctor's degree in English.

Those are the simple facts, readily available to anyone who can lay hands on a University of Illinois catalogue. The truth is not so easy to come by. I shall try to give some of it to you in the time at my disposal.

I have been giving the course since its establishment, and I must confess first that I have taught a somewhat different course each semester for the past eight years, one might almost say sixteen different courses, all under the same label, "The Theory and Practice of English Composition." I have experimented with various ways to serve the particular and immediate needs of very different classes. About the only thing I have not done with it so far is to transform it into a graduate course in creative writing, and yet that is just what many prospective registrants hope it will be. At every registration I have to explain to budding authors, sadly and a bit wistfully, that Rhetoric 480, with its ambiguous catalogue label and description, is not really a course in writing at all but a teacher-training course. I am ashamed to tell them that the catalogue entry which misled them is a bit of deliberate camouflage designed to keep an English Department course from falling into the hands of the educationists.

The course was developed by the English Department at the suggestion of our University Senate Committee on Student English. It is only one cog in an elaborate piece of machinery which we have set up to keep us honest; to keep us from giving college degrees to young people who are actually illiterate.

The Committee on Student English studied the case histories of our teachers of Freshman Rhetoric and discovered that most of them got into the teaching profession almost inadvertently. The

whole thing started during their adolescence when, instead of playing wholesome games and adjusting to their age group, they curled up in a corner with a good book. This strange practice endeared them to their English teachers and made English courses in high school and college much more attractive to them than were other more difficult courses. They naturally became English majors, and the best of them were encouraged by good grades in English to go on to the Master of Arts degree in English. There was not much else they could do. This was before the College English Association put on its campaign to convince the world that an English major is really a very marketable commodity. In those days even an M.A., by itself, was redeemable only as a down payment on a Ph.D. The Master of Arts in English was not sufficient to qualify young people to become school masters at the elementary or secondary school level, but it was, surprisingly, quite sufficient to qualify them for teaching at the college or university level. In fact, they found university English departments clamoring for them as graduate students and as teachers of Freshman English. Their adolescent crush on English teachers was by now transferred to dear old Professor Soandso, whose idyllic life, so surrounded by good books, seemed most alluring to them. And so, without any particular professional training for teaching, they suddenly awoke to find themselves in a college English classroom with about twenty eager but ignorant freshmen staring at them.

It was to meet this rather embarrassing and challenging situation that the Committee on Student English advised the English Department to provide some formal in-service training for beginning or prospective teachers of Freshman Rhetoric. In fact the committee recommended "that assistants in Rhetoric who are deemed inadequately prepared to teach

this subject to freshmen be required to take, as early as possible in their teaching careers here, courses in the field of English language and composition which are recommended by the Director of the Rhetoric Division, and that they be permitted to take a limited number of such courses (1½ to 2 units) for credit toward their degrees."

Now, as I look back on it, I think the department made several mistakes in trying to carry out the directive. In the first place, the teacher-training course was made optional and open to any graduate student, and, in the second, it was not successfully grafted onto the traditional Ph.D. program. The scholarly graduate professors who advise students in their registration have politely ignored the existence of the course. One told me, rather bluntly I thought, that he considered his own demands for literary excellence in the writing of the doctoral dissertation a sufficient amount of training in composition teaching for any graduate student.

Furthermore, our course has been taught by the Chairman of the Freshman Rhetoric Staff, who has been reluctant to exercise the authority granted him to require the people he employs to take the course which he teaches. You can see the ethical dilemma we have been in.

As a result, the course has served very few of the people for whom it was originally designed. It enrolls from five to a dozen students each semester, most of them headed for high school or junior college work. It has occasionally been offered as a Saturday two-hour class for the benefit of commuting high school teachers who wish to know more about what their college-preparatory students will encounter at the university. It has thus, I believe, made a valuable contribution to our articulation program.

The course has, in recent years, attracted quite a few foreign students who are here for too short a time to embark

on the standard program for graduate degrees. They are teaching English as a foreign language in their home countries. This year, for example, I have had students from the Philippines, from Chile, and from France alongside downstate high school teachers and an occasional eccentric member of my own staff. Perhaps I should try to deceive myself and you into thinking that the course has achieved such an international reputation that students come from the far corners of the earth to take it. I'll not try to deceive you thus. In the February, 1953, *College Composition and Communication*, Professor Wikelund, of Indiana, reported to you that he had had the same experience. I quote from his article: "Because of its broad professional emphasis, the proseminar was open to all graduate students in the university and during its first two years students from foreign countries and from the School of Education enrolled; but their special interests were not easily served by the course and always constituted an unwieldy, alien element." That is a kindly and diplomatic way of putting it. Professor Wikelund goes on to say, "Today the proseminar is strictly a practical, intensive, in-service training program restricted to those graduate-student members of its composition staff who lack the requisite experience."

In our efforts to answer the question of who should take such a course, we at Illinois may work out some modification of the solution arrived at in Indiana. I would be reluctant, however, to bar from such a course the poor benighted heathen from foreign lands or from that other planet, the College of Education. I think, in fact, that we have a real obligation to bring the gospel to such unfortunates.

I have, with reluctance and regret, come to the conclusion that such a course as I have finally worked out should be required of all new staff members. But it should not be restricted to them. The

students from other lands, the high school teachers, and the fugitives from the College of Education can give such a course its proper perspective and can keep it from becoming narrow and provincial.

It was, in fact, the presence of students with widely divergent backgrounds and particular needs which forced me to change the course and reduce it to a sort of lowest common denominator. What, I asked myself, is the biggest problem which all teachers of English everywhere have in common? It is the young person seated at a desk, with a blank piece of paper before him, and gnawing on a pencil, while ideas tumble over one another in his mind. Our job is to help him get those ideas arranged in his mind and recorded on that sheet of paper.

Now this is serious and sacred business, and it is worthy of our best efforts. We are dealing with a natural and creative urge which, if properly guided, will bring immeasurable personal growth and satisfaction to the student and may, ultimately, change the course of human affairs. We must remember that our civilization has been shaped by those who were once young people staring blankly at blank sheets of paper. Somehow they finally got their ideas organized and written out, and we are the richer for it.

Even as I speak, in hundreds of college dormitories and rooming houses across the country, college freshmen are scrawling on blank sheets of paper, and their papers will be waiting for us when we return to our desks. While we sit solemnly in smoke-filled hotel rooms in St. Louis and quibble about the relative merits of composition and communication programs or the latest developments in the upper stratosphere of linguistics research, many of our students are waging a desperate fight against early academic death because of inadequacies in the training they have received in their

use of the English language. Most of us, I am sure, come to these meetings to find out how we can best help these students. The meetings are really worthwhile only insofar as they enable us to return to our desks and face that pile of themes with greater equanimity and greater confidence that we handle them properly. All else is sound and fury signifying nothing.

I have come to the conclusion that the backbone of any respectable course in either composition or communication is the careful, considerate, and constructive criticism of the student's writing efforts. When I consider an applicant for a teaching position on my staff, I try to determine first of all whether he is qualified by training and temperament to give our students this careful, considerate, constructive criticism. If he is so qualified, I don't care much whether he knows Charles Fries from Charles Atlas. If he is not so qualified and our need for teachers is so great that I have to hire him anyway, I feel that my first and most urgent obligation is to train him to analyze and evaluate student writing properly. I think most administrators of freshman English programs will agree with me that the greatest cause of student-teacher maladjustment in our area stems from unfair, unreasonable, or erratic evaluation of the student's writing efforts. "He gives me a low grade, but there are no marks on the paper!" "I know it's lousy, but what can I do to improve it?" "But my roommate turned in the same theme to Mr. X and he gave it a B plus!"

So Rhetoric 480 at the University of Illinois is, at present, predominantly a course of training in literary criticism, and I use the term *literary* very, very loosely. Fortunately the training in discrimination which our staff members have had in their literature courses does carry over into their judgment of student writing. They have learned to tell

the difference between good, bad, and indifferent English prose. And I am confident that their extensive exposure to the writing efforts of young people makes them more sensitive to and more appreciative of the work of the mature masters.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that the members of this Conference on College Composition and Communication, nicknamed the Four C's, dedicate themselves to these four C's—the careful, considerate, constructive criticism of the student's writing efforts.

POSTSCRIPT: Since the above report was written, one major change has been made in the course described. The class now meets for two two-hour sessions each week. During the first hour, the graduate students in Rhetoric 480 attend a Freshman Rhetoric class taught by one of our more experienced and able staff

members. They take seats in the back of the room and do not participate in any way. What they observe is fairly typical of what goes on in hundreds of similar classes throughout the campus. Each graduate student makes a particular study of several of the freshmen in the class, noting their participation in class discussion and examining all the written work they do, after it has gone through the routine process of evaluation, correction, and revision.

During the second hour, the graduate students, the teacher of the freshman class, and the teacher of the graduate class spend some time discussing, with utmost candor, the events of the preceding hour. Occasionally, the graduate class skips the observation period and spends a full two hours discussing philosophy and theory, but it never gets far from the problems actually faced by the classroom teacher of writing.

The University of Kansas Course in the College Teaching of English¹

ALBERT R. KITZHABER²

The training course in the college teaching of English, entitled "Rhetorical Background of Written English," is now in its fourth year at the University of Kansas. It was inaugurated to meet a variety of needs, some of them stemming directly from local problems, others from what we believed were more

general conditions found throughout the profession of composition teaching.

I

In order to make more clear the nature of what I have called the local problems, I shall have to say a few words about our program at Kansas. First, it is moderately large. We offer, as a rule, about 140 sections of nine required courses in composition, or composition and literature; this total includes the courses in the engineering English cur-

¹A paper given at the second general session, CCCC Spring Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, March 4, 5, and 6, 1954, on the general subject, "Current Courses in the Training of the Composition/Communication Teacher."

²University of Kansas

riculum, as well as the sequence that nearly all other students in the University are obliged to take during their first two years. Like most other state universities, we must rely on graduate student instructors to carry a large part of this load, though in our department all ranks, including the department chairman, do some of their teaching in the program. Since most of our young instructors come to us with little or no previous teaching experience, we need to have some means of supervising their work. We must coordinate and direct their efforts so as to keep the many sections of a given course more or less together. We must help them to know what to teach; for though such young teachers usually have an abundance of enthusiasm and the best will in the world, they are often at a loss to know just where and with what to begin.

These are the local needs that our training course is trying to meet—though actually they are not entirely local, for they are common to most schools of medium size or larger that employ considerable numbers of advanced-degree candidates in the required courses. The satisfaction of the more general professional needs which I spoke of a moment ago is, to our mind, a much more important function that the course is endeavoring to fulfill. The course will, we trust, improve the teaching that these young people are doing for us now, but we hope that its value will not end there. We would like to give the students in this course something that will be of use to them as long as they are teaching composition, whether on our campus or elsewhere. And, even after they have served their novitiate and have been transplanted to the headier regions of the teaching of literature, we hope they will have gained a perspective that will cause them to show more understanding of the problems of composition work, and a keener appreciation of its impor-

tance, than I am afraid many literary scholars now do.

Consider, for a moment, the typical graduate-student instructor, his interests and training. He wants to teach literature, not only because he is sure he will enjoy teaching it, but also because he has already realized that academic success and respectability lie mainly in that direction. And, quite likely, he will make a pretty good teacher of literature. Why shouldn't he? Except for a course in freshman English years ago, and possibly (though by no means certainly) one in advanced composition and another in English grammar, all his professional training has been literary. He has read widely in English and American literature, his graduate courses are introducing him to the best literary scholarship, he probably has had or is taking a course in literary criticism—in short, he knows a good deal about literature, has thought about it reflectively, and either has formed or is in process of forming a sort of philosophy of the teaching of literature. That is, he is developing a coherent body of attitudes toward literature—its tradition, its values, its methods—which gives him, as nothing else can, a sound professional view of his subject.

But—and here is the irony—the young teacher finds that, for a good many years to come, his making a living will depend less on teaching literature, for which he has been carefully prepared, than on teaching composition, for which he has had little special preparation. It is true, of course, that a knowledge of good literature is an indispensable part of the composition teacher's equipment; after all, one must know what good writing is if he is to diagnose the ills of poor writing. But the widely held assumption that equipping a student to teach literature will automatically fit him to teach composition with equal competence is not valid—no more so than the unshakable conviction of some high school prin-

cipals that anyone who speaks English can teach it. Many of us, perhaps, are acquainted with good literary scholars who would be nearly helpless if faced with a class in freshman English.

It was our opinion at the University of Kansas that, if our training course in the teaching of English were to be realistic, we would need to include much more than details of procedure concerned with the day-to-day operation of the required courses; we would have to make some effort to help our beginning teachers form the same sort of professional attitude toward the teaching of composition as they already have toward the teaching of literature. We had no wish to standardize, to impose teaching methods or teaching philosophies. We wanted, rather, to put our young teachers in the way of ideas that would stimulate them to think seriously about the teaching of composition. We wanted to help them develop ideas of their own and organize these ideas into some sort of coherent system. And, finally, we wanted to give them the opportunity to put their ideas to the test in their own classrooms. Once these young people have got their degrees, they move on to positions in other colleges; we felt that such a regimen of professional training as we wished to offer, centered around our training course though not confined to it, would justify us in saying to their next employers that here were good teachers, teachers who knew what they were about, as competent in the teaching of composition as in the teaching of literature.

It was painfully obvious to all of us that this was a large order. We were not deceived into thinking that any one course could do the job as well as, ideally, we would like to see it done. But, because a single course carrying two credits was all there was room for, we decided to go ahead, believing that even

a partial accomplishment would be worthwhile.

II

Both the form and the content of the course now differ from what they were when the course was first offered. We probably will continue to make changes in it from time to time, though we believe we now have a reasonably workable arrangement. The course meets for a single two-hour session from seven to nine p.m. in alternate weeks throughout the year. It yields two graduate credits, one each semester, and is required for all part-time instructors during their first year on the job; full-time instructors who lack previous teaching experience are obliged to audit the course during their first year. Other teachers who wish to attend are welcome, of course.

The two-hour class meeting is divided equally between lecture and discussion—a lecture during the first half of the period on whatever topic is being considered that week, followed by a discussion that aims to work out some of the practical applications of the theoretical material presented in the lecture. In this way we try to avoid the unreality of the purely theoretical course, and at the same time offer enough legitimate subject matter to distinguish the course sharply from courses in “educational methods.” We regard it not as a course in how to teach, but as one in what to teach; it is, in other words, a course which we may validly claim to be one in English.

The first meeting of the year is devoted to what may be called orientation. That is, the underlying assumptions of the course are explained, the year's work is charted out, and the field of study is defined. At the second meeting there is a lecture on the rhetorical tradition—a rapid survey touching on those aspects of classical theory that have most relevance for the teaching of composition;

then we move to the British rhetoricians of the late 18th century and examine critically their doctrine as well as the 19th century American tradition which was based on their ideas and which, for the most part unfortunately, has continued to guide much instruction in composition down to the present day. The third meeting surveys the relations that have existed in the past between psychology and rhetoric, and examines modern personality psychology for what light it can throw on the writing process and on creativity.

The next topic, linguistics and rhetoric, which introduces the student to the scientific study of language, is followed by two meetings on grammar and usage; one presents some of the main features of the work of the great historical grammarians (Jespersen, Poutsma, Curme, and the rest), the other discusses the teaching of grammar and usage: not methods of teaching them, but aims and assumptions. A meeting on punctuation follows—the development of punctuation from the time of the Renaissance printers, to its systematic formulation by John Wilson in the 19th century, and on to George Summey's excellent study of present practice. The semester's work is concluded with a lecture and discussion on the rhetoric of the paragraph, a matter that has not received really critical attention in textbooks for nearly sixty years.

During this semester the students are required to read all of either Aristotle's *Rhetoric* or Cicero's *De Oratore*, several chapters from *Language* by Leonard Bloomfield, three chapters from Fries's *American English Grammar*, two from Perrin's *Writer's Guide* (those on "The Activity of Writing" and "Varieties of English"), and fifty pages from Summey's *American Punctuation*. Besides a final examination, there are two assigned papers. The first is a sort of intellectual autobiography, scheduled at the first of

the term, in which the students are asked to examine critically those beliefs they hold that have led them to choose English teaching as a career, and to determine as exactly as they can what their attitudes are toward the teaching of composition and literature. These papers, which are regarded as confidential, seem to have been helpful to the students by making them clarify their ideas at the outset of their careers; they certainly have been useful to us, for they have let us know something of the background and beliefs of the new teachers who will be working with us in the composition program. Though these papers are not graded, they are carefully corrected for style, in the belief that those who teach composition should pay pretty close attention to their own writing; a conference is held with each student when his paper is returned to him.

The other required paper is a study of usage, assigned when the class is discussing grammar and usage. Each student chooses a particular disputed usage—"different than," the split infinitive, etc.—looks it up in authoritative reference works, and presents the evidence he finds, together with his conclusion. As a convenience to the students, we have secured from the University library on a permanent charge some two dozen of the most authoritative works on grammar, usage, and related matters and have shelved them in one of the large English offices. We have, incidentally, found that making the books so accessible has encouraged other staff members to consult them regularly.

Because, starting with the second semester, our main required English program becomes composition and literature, instead of composition alone, we have found it useful in this semester to devote an early session of the training course to a discussion of literary theory. The discussion is, I am afraid, rather superficial—it could hardly be anything else

—but we do try to give the students some notion of the more significant critical approaches to literature, and to encourage them to develop or refine their own theories. After this comes a meeting on English prose style, followed by one on the reading and grading of student compositions. The next topic is subjects for compositions—the old rhetorical category of *inventio*, the finding of subject-matter for a discourse. The next two meetings take up the relations between semantics and rhetoric, and logic and rhetoric. An evening devoted to English placement or entrance examinations follows; for this meeting we invite the director of the University Guidance Bureau to give the lecture and lead the discussion, since it is the Guidance Bureau that administers the test on our campus. The final meeting of the course discusses various types of composition and communication programs now in operation in the nation's colleges; the discussion centers around information contained in our collection of some sixty current syllabuses of freshman programs.

By way of atonement for having overworked the class for their one credit in the first semester, we don't require so much reading in the second term: two chapters from Dobrée's *Modern Prose Style*, the half dozen chapters on language and style from George Philip Krapp's *The Knowledge of English*, the long chapter on logic from Altick's *Preface to Critical Reading*, and all of Hayakawa's *Language in Thought and Action*. The students write two papers: one a style analysis of a passage of contemporary prose, the other a thorough critique of a current textbook on English composition—a review in which the student is expected to bring to bear a good part of what he has learned in the course during the year.

III

This, for better or worse, is our sem-

inar in the college teaching of English. It is not, we are sure, in its final or its best form. We expect to continue tinkering with it in the years ahead. Certain things, though, we have intentionally excluded from the course and will probably continue to do so. Except for incidental discussion in the second hour of the meetings, we do not take up routine matters such as how to handle assignments, what to do about late themes, how to take care of plagiarism, etc. It is not that we think these matters unimportant; we simply believe there are other and better ways of attending to them. Each teacher has a forty-page syllabus that gives in detail just about all the information needed to cover any of these eventualities. When some problem comes up that is not included in the syllabus, the teacher can always consult the director of the required courses.

In the seminar we spend only one meeting specifically on the reading and grading of themes, though of course nearly every topic discussed through the year is more or less relevant to this matter. We also have, however, several full staff meetings during the year where everyone teaching the required courses—full professor and graduate student alike—brings with him a set of four mimeographed themes which have been distributed earlier and which he has marked and graded. We have found that this sort of meeting, where both experienced and inexperienced teachers can compare grades and criticisms, is more stimulating and worthwhile than one where only the beginning instructors are present. Finally, as one more check on the grading standards of inexperienced teachers, the director of the composition program examines carefully a set of marked and graded themes from each new part-time instructor at least once during the year, and then has a conference with that instructor.

The last item that has intentionally been left out of the training course is discussion of teaching methodology. We have done this not alone because we wish to distinguish our course from one in Education, but mainly because we believe that specific teaching methods are a perishable commodity, that a method that works well for one teacher having his own personality and beliefs will not necessarily work just as well for someone else. We believe that if we can achieve a reasonably close agreement on *what* should be taught, we can safely leave the *how* to the individual teacher's own good judgment and initiative. There are, of course, hints about mannerisms, voice, language, and so on, that any new teacher can profit from, but these we try to take care of by having the director of the program visit each beginning teacher's class at least once in the first year he teaches, and follow the visit up with a conference at which such suggestions as need to be made can be offered tactfully and in privacy.

We are well aware that there are defects in the present training course. An obvious one is that sixteen meetings in two semesters are not nearly enough to accomplish the aims we have in mind. Meeting as we do only in alternate weeks, there is an awkward gap between meetings that makes it nearly impossible to give coherence to the topics we cover, or a clear sense of progression to the course as a whole. Because we meet so seldom, and because we try to discuss such a variety of topics, it is plain that the lectures must be pitched at a pretty high level of generalization, and that they must at least run the risk of being superficial. Perhaps, considering the time we can allot it, the course is over-ambitious.

On the other hand, we have tried, with what we hope is moderate success, to counteract some of these disadvantages. For example, though we only scratch the

surface of topics like linguistics and logic and psychology, we give the class detailed bibliographies, often annotated, as well as considerable other mimeographed material, to provide them with the means of more exhaustive study either now or at some future time. And, after all, the composition teacher does not need to have a professional competence in all these many fields; what he does need is to know that these disciplines exist, that they offer data that are valuable for the teaching of writing, and that these data are accessible to him. This much we feel the course is accomplishing.

There have been other accomplishments, too. Through the course, we have, in the first place, been able to keep in continuing touch with our beginning teachers all through their first year of service; we discuss with them, at regular intervals, matters that are of direct concern to them and relevant to the work they are doing in the classroom. We have been able, in other words, to exercise a necessary measure of control over their teaching, yet have done it, we hope, tactfully and without resorting to strictures. We have, besides, in the portion of the class meetings set aside for discussion, provided these young people with a forum where they can ask questions without embarrassment, share their ideas freely, and, in general, rub each others' rough edges off. Finally, we have some reason to believe that a good deal of the material in the lectures is new to most members of the class—or new, at least, in its connection with the teaching of composition, which they usually have regarded before as something that is pretty much cut-and-dried. We hope that the new ideas the students have met are helping to enrich their teaching; we hope, too, that the students are being encouraged to do some reflective thinking about writing and the teaching of writing. We would like to believe that

they have been given the impetus and at least some of the materials that they will need to form their own "philosophy of rhetoric," and thus gain a truly pro-

fessional knowledge of the teaching of composition, as well as of the teaching of literature.

One Method of Training the Composition Teacher¹

JOSEPH SCHWARTZ²

I have always assumed that to talk about the teaching of teaching was the height of educational decadence. And here I find myself doing just that. My only apology is the present urgent need for all of us who are interested in composition to reappraise our present attitudes and programs. For more years than I can remember, English departments have carelessly assumed that anyone can teach Freshman English. If we are currently embarrassed by finding this same attitude expressed by the deans of our colleges, we have only ourselves to blame. For too many years we have delegated the teaching of Freshman English to people who have been unprepared for such teaching and thus were incompetent. Perhaps the national decrease in English majors can be traced in part to just this. The course which I am going to describe is an attempt to overcome the casual naivete which has so long guided the organization of the Freshman English program. The formal title of this course at Marquette University is English 208: Seminar in the Teaching of College Composition. All the graduate teaching assistants are required to take the course. All new instructors are strongly urged (and in some cases, re-

quired) to audit the course. I think it is a happy sign that such a course as this exists, and that more of this kind are being planned.

The need for a formal course in the teaching of college composition has always existed. It is only recently that this need has been admitted. And it is only in the immediate past that steps have been taken to remedy this serious deficiency. We are slowly reaching that state of wisdom which tells us that we cannot expect any teacher to do a good job in teaching composition when his only preparation has been his own courses in Freshman English, taken when he was a freshman in college. This is, after all, the only "formal" training of a kind that most of the freshman composition teachers in the United States have ever had. I know that the growing multiplication of literary studies and the broadening of the literary program make it difficult to squeeze another course into the graduate student's program. But squeeze, we must, if we are to live up to the responsibility which every English department owes to the most students that it ever handles—the freshmen—God bless them! I unhesitatingly accept the principle that the most important course any department of English gives is its course in Freshman English. Without a strong course at the base of the structure, the top-heavy edifice will crumble. It is not too much to insist, then, that the teacher

¹A paper given at the second general session, CCCC Spring Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, March 4, 5, and 6, 1954, on the general subject, "Current Courses in the Training of the Composition/Communication Teacher."

²Marquette University

of Freshman English should in some measure be trained for his trenchant and essential task. This is the most important reason for instituting a course in the teaching of college composition.

Needless to say, every department is staffed by a certain number of teachers who do not need such a course. They are men of insight and perception. Given a telephone book as the only text, they would probably teach their students to write brilliantly, think logically, and read intelligently. Unfortunately, such teachers are as rare as students who could learn from a telephone book. Furthermore, the present pattern in the large college and university does not encourage the teacher of wide and varied experience to teach freshman composition. He is busy within his own field, winning the publication laurels necessary for academic and financial advancement. Who teaches the freshmen? Graduate teaching assistants, instructors fresh from A.M. or Ph.D. studies, and those few rare souls who volunteer simply because they like the freshmen. It is for the two former classes that a course of this nature has been constructed. Teaching assistants with no teaching experience and instructors with little teaching experience should be required to take such a course when they become a part of the teaching staff. Further, I believe, that any instructor coming to a new school should be required to audit such a course, the purpose being to acquaint him with the particular and specific teaching circumstance which he now faces.

Before I describe the kind of course currently being offered at Marquette University, I would like to acquaint you with some of the particular problems which we face. Most of our instructors have just finished their master's degrees, and have little or no teaching experience. Our teaching assistants are pursuing the master's degree, having just received their A.B. In the kind of situation which

we face, a course in the teaching of college composition becomes even more necessary.

I remember that, when this course was first offered, the Dean of our Graduate School was a bit disturbed. He wondered if there was sufficient content in a course of this nature to justify giving graduate credit for it. I assume that same question is in your minds. Therefore, I would like to describe simply what a course in the teaching of college composition offers.

English 208 is not simply a course in methods, although method is not ignored. The observation of freshman instructors for ten semesters has emphasized for me the need for some instruction in the practical details of day-to-day teaching. Thus, some part of the course should be set aside for the practical problems of teaching composition. The procedure of the first week of class should be explained in some detail to the fledgling instructor. Some discussion concerning the relationship between the faculty member and his students deserves a place in the course. How informal need a teacher be in order to gain the personal confidence of his student-writers? How can this be balanced with the necessary formal (or mature) college attitude? The beginning instructor can profit from a discussion of the principal initial errors of freshman students; from an analysis of the ordinary strengths and deficiencies of beginning writers; from a discussion of ways of motivating students to make a conscious effort to write better. Usually, the new instructor needs some directives on how to deal with plagiarism, an ever-present threat in composition courses. If the instructor, because of lack of experience, has never had a conference with a freshman student, we cannot expect him to know how to use one of the most fruitful means of teaching, unless the past experience of others has been put at his disposal. What

I am aiming at is this: why should we continue to encourage the teachers of freshman composition to teach as if no one had ever taught the course before. We insist that our majors in literary courses be well-indoctrinated in the literature of the field. Furthermore, the instructor with an A.M. has been exposed to from forty to sixty hours of the ways and means of teaching literature from his course work alone. I am convinced that the freshman composition teacher should also build on the experience of others. Individuality should not, of course, be sacrificed. But individuality alone is an erratic guide, except for the very rare beginning instructor. To be exact, in the course which I teach, a series of "HOW TO" exercises have proved invaluable for the beginning teacher:

How to use the essay as a model for freshman writing;

How to teach the research project;

How to teach outlining and the precis;

How to handle recurrent and persistent errors on students' themes;

How to use student themes as classroom material;

How to prepare a final examination;

How to prepare individual assignments for the superior or inferior student;

How to use exercises in the classroom;

How to conduct a personal conference.

In this way, he can learn from the experience of others.

Further, there are larger practical problems which the new instructors can work out together by trial and error under the supervision of the person teaching the course. A series of lesson plans designed by the new instructor for his current teaching and reviewed by someone of greater experience, can help the new teacher to plan his class meetings in an economical and productive manner. If a series of sample themes are corrected, graded and discussed by the members of the course, closer unity in grad-

ing and a better understanding of the value of freshman writing are bound to occur. These are some of the practical problems or methods stressed in the course given at Marquette University.

If the new instructor is at sea about many of the problems of method which he faces, he is lost in a fog when it comes to the material which he is teaching. The extent of his knowledge is too often bounded by the covers of the *Handbook* being used in the course. Generally, the teacher stands below his material and is "working it up" rather than above it. He has little knowledge of theories of language. Sometimes he is unaware of the development and change of language. Even more often, the beginning teacher knows nothing of rhetorical principles. For him, *rhetorical* has only one meaning—"emphasizing style at the expense of thought." A course in the teaching of college composition should be planned with a realistic knowledge of this condition. It is not too unusual to find in such a group one instructor remembering too vividly the grammar of his foreign language courses, stressing the paradigm of "shall" and "will," and another who has read too little of Fries, denying the existence of word function. To solve this problem of extremes, a certain body of rhetoric and linguistics should be reviewed.

Most of the people taking a course of this kind are well armed with all the permutations and combinations of modern criticism. They are conversant with all the terms and schools, and can distinguish the new critics from the old with the ease of a practiced scholar. But they are ignorant of the many contributions of the scholars who have made the "new linguistics" fashionable. They teach composition with attitudes that were hardened before Fries or Pooley were even born. I do not wish to argue the merit of the new linguistics at this point. I only want to make clear that whatever

linguistic position one holds, the materials prepared by the modern linguist should be studied and evaluated. The materials for such a review are available—the books have been published and the articles written. Close attention to *College English* and *College Composition and Communication* will bring the latest facts and opinions to the new teacher's attention.

In the field of rhetoric, however, the abundant material of modern controversy does not exist. And, let it be emphasized, the beginning teacher is most woefully weak in this area. The fundamental principles of rhetoric apply no matter how composition or grammar is taught. No one would dream of teaching Shakespeare without having read the plays; merely reading the critics would be of little help. Yet instructors regularly teach composition after having read only the weakened variations of rhetorical principles in modern texts. The instructor who has read Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian is difficult to find. Yet without an understanding of the basic principles of rhetoric, the most that an instructor can do is mark errors in spelling and punctuation. *Invention, disposition, and style* are still the fundamental tools of the writer.

Thus, in a course in the teaching of college composition, I would insist on a review of the matter of *linguistics* and *rhetoric*, with special emphasis on the latter. The only way that we will achieve the wholesome and necessary balance between what Morton Bloomfield so brilliantly called FACT and VALUE is by recognizing the *facts* of linguistics and the *values* of rhetoric.³

Another objective of English 208 is to acquaint the students with the literature in the field. This is done by preparing skeleton bibliographies. Then the

students are asked to fill in the bibliography with the results of their own research. Reports are requested on the more important books and articles. An awareness of the literature within the field will improve the character of the student's teaching and it will enlarge his respect for the teaching of composition.

Finally, all students taking the course are asked to prepare a seminar paper in which they give form and expression to some individual research. The topics may be theoretical or experimental. The papers in the past have ranged from "A Study of Classical Rhetoric and Modern Authors" to "An Analysis of the Decline in the Mechanics of Expression of Entering Freshmen." The results of such original investigations have proved stimulating and helpful.

Now let me indicate for you briefly how the course is conducted. The practical problems, mentioned before, are handled largely through class discussion. The free exchange of opinion has always affected the members of the group. Even the most violent partisans of one method or another find that their attitude has been modified when they get into the classroom. Because the members of the class are teaching from day-to-day, they can bring concrete and specific teaching instances to the class discussions, either as illustrations of success or as questions for help. Sometimes the one person with experience must lecture to the others who do not have it. Since I am Chairman of Freshman English as well, the necessary class visitations, the resulting personal conferences with the instructors, and the individual theme analysis sessions provide me with all the material I need to outline and discuss the practical problems which need the most attention from semester to semester.

The units on rhetoric and linguistics have been handled in a variety of ways. The opening sessions should be lecture-meetings in order to give all of the mem-

³Morton Bloomfield, "The Problem of Fact and Value in the Teaching of English," *College English*, 15 (October, 1953): 33-37.

bers of the class a skeleton background. Later, the lectures alternate with student reports and discussion periods. I have not hesitated to ask experts within the department to assist me with certain units; every department has its linguistics expert, rhetoric expert, or reading expert. And I believe that it is to the advantage of the whole department for instructors of wide experience to offer their services when they can be of value. It often happens that certain class meetings or seminar papers are significant enough to ask the entire freshman teaching staff to attend. In this way the course can be integrated with the work of the rest of the teaching staff. The last part of the course is devoted to a reading and discussion of the Seminar Papers. In short, different methods for handling the course have been proposed to fit different units.

The course generally achieves at least one thing. It makes the beginning teachers more conscious of their teaching. They are given an opportunity to discuss their teaching, and this carries over beyond the limits of the classroom. Once this has been accomplished, other goods rapidly result. Teaching becomes less haphazard; assignments are more clearly planned; themes more carefully checked. At least the avenues for the further study of linguistics and rhetoric have been opened up. The Seminar, acting as a control group, has taken the place of much unnecessary and unpleasant experience. Trial and error has been reduced to a minimum; and, although experimentation has not been discouraged, the lines for possible and valid experimentation have been drawn. It is not too much to hope that better, because more conscious, teaching has been the result. In

this way the vast array of freshmen benefit, and thus, in a direct and efficient manner, the Department of English also gains.

I encourage those of you who find yourselves in the same position as we at Marquette did to consider adopting such a course. If you do not do it, another department, which shall remain nameless, will. The need for such courses is so pressing, that of necessity someone will fill the vacuum. I sincerely hope that in every college and university this will be the Department of English. For we, as well as any other department, can teach the tricks of our own trade. But we can do more than teach tricks. Our own high resolve, our training in the greatest of the humanities, and our sensitivity to the beautiful may well be our greatest assets in forming the attitudes of these new instructors. The spirit and the love of teaching a particular subject is what we have to offer to the beginning teacher. Nothing tests the high ideal and the noble goal of teaching better than the teaching of Freshman English. Those of us who have survived the test should be the ones to communicate this victory to our new and untried spirits. As I think it over now in this light, the teaching of teaching does not seem as decadent or embarrassing as I once thought.

If it is convenient to pay dues in NCTE and CCCC in the first quarter of the calendar year, why not pay both NCTE and CCCC dues between January 1 and March 1? That will obviate thinking about dues in those first busy weeks of the fall term. Early renewals, of course, are marked up for a full year beyond the dates of expiration.

Administration of the Freshman English Program

EMERSON C. SHUCK¹

The existence of "Freshman English" in most American colleges poses numerous special administrative problems. Since most of these are the result of sheer student numbers, the prospect of increasingly large entering classes in the next decades makes continual review of the structure imperative. Yet, very few available studies of Freshman English have dealt with actual current practices.² The present report of answers to two recent questionnaires may therefore contain useful information for those who must do long-range departmental planning.

The first set of questions was sent in March, 1953, to thirty-five Midwestern institutions, selected to give a representative cross-section of types and sizes. The twenty-six replies (74 per cent) represented FE enrollments ranging from 130 to 3569, with twelve over 1000 and nine below 500. A second, different questionnaire was sent in March, 1954, to the English departments of eighty-three multiple-purpose institutions in the United States reporting total enrollments between 2500 and 7000.³ The seventy responses (84 per cent) to these questions were tabulated in three groups, based upon reported enrollment in Freshman English courses: (I) eleven schools re-

porting 300-499 in FE, (II) twenty-five representing FE enrollments of 500-999, and (III) thirty-four with 1000-2500 registered in FE.

Since only four colleges were duplicated in the two sets of replies, the earlier results will be used to supplement the later, larger study.

I

One obvious source of problems in administering FE lies in the desire to give adequate attention to the individual student. In small groups this is automatically achieved by an experienced teacher, but students by the hundreds, representing astounding variations in background preparation, complicate the matter. Hence, the need for many administrative devices. How is the teachable class to be achieved?

Class size. It has long been agreed among composition teachers that classes of twenty are preferable to classes of thirty; but the question is being pressed by college administrators whether such "small" classes are any more effective than the larger ones. Logic and experienced testimony need to be buttressed by significant quantitative research on this point, lest class sizes be pushed higher and higher as college enrollments swell. It is interesting to note that the replies to both of our surveys show that the larger the institution (inevitably putting more distance between the college administrators and the teaching act), the larger the classes in FE.

For the sixty-six institutions reporting in 1954 both total enrollment and number of sections, the general average class size in FE was 24.0 and that for the twenty-six in 1953 was 25.1. In the 1954 survey, covering the country more gen-

¹Bowling Green State University

²Practices of approximately 122 colleges in "Some Aspects of Freshman English" were reported by Earl L. Sasser in *College Composition and Communication*, III (October, 1952), 12-14; more recently John C. Hodges has made a general statement, in "A New Look by Administrators at Rank, Salary, and Teaching Load," *Ibid.*, VI (February, 1955), 15-17. These two articles are, however, the only recent broadly useful ones.

³Figures reported in *Education Directory of the Federal Security Agency, 1952-53*, Part 3, *Higher Education* (Washington: 1952) were used to determine the mailing list. I wish to express my debt to my colleague, Dr. Norbert O'Donnell, for his work in making the preliminary tabulation of replies.

erally, there was a direct relation between size of school and size of classes. The thirty-two schools with 1000 or more students in FE (Group III) averaged 24.7 students per section, while the twenty-four with 500-999 (Group II) averaged 23.8, and the ten in Group I averaged 22.1. The progression was fairly consistent also when the schools were ranked in groups of ten in order of the total FE enrollments:

Total FE Enrollment	Average Class Size
300- 399	22.1
400- 599	22.9
600- 774	23.3
775- 999	24.1
1000-1299	24.8
1300-1699	24.3
1700-2500	25.3

The largest average class size was 32 per section, in a school with 800 in FE. On the other hand, one institution with over 1800 in FE had an average class size of 20.7.

Teaching load. The total teaching load for each instructor could not be accurately determined from the 1954 questions, but it appeared that most institutions regard four sections of composition a full load, with very few persons having a full assignment to composition. In the 1953 survey the answers to a direct question about the normal "full" teaching load showed an average of 12.1 semester hours for twenty-six schools, with various compensations for composition assignments, including a limit on the number of classes given to any one instructor, and plans of counting more credit hours than usual for composition classes.

Type of course. The standard FE course varied in broad concept less than might be supposed. Forty-one (59 per cent)⁴ of the seventy institutions report-

ing in 1954 considered their course to be comprised of rhetoric and composition, although some twenty-eight indicated that reading of literature was also included. Only six (9 per cent) of the seventy (all in Group III) specified that they used a "communications" approach, and in three of these there was a parallel composition course of the traditional sort for a large fraction of the students. The 1953 survey revealed sixteen institutions (46 per cent) offering mainly exposition, two (5 per cent) exposition and creative writing, eight (23 per cent) composition and literature, and five (14 per cent) "communications." In both surveys, however, a number of institutions indicated that they used several types as parallel or sequential courses.

Student placement. There are many placement tests given to freshmen. The Cooperative English Test (in some part or form) was the most commonly used by English departments reporting in 1953, with a scattering over a number of others. An original theme by the student would seem to be a desirable test, but any large number of students militates against its use except as a follow-up refinement. This is another place where research is needed to validate a test which can be objectively scored locally and yet measure the students' writing skills.

Practices of sectioning students were somewhat divided. Yet, only thirteen (18 per cent) of the 1954 group of seventy checked that they employed no selective sectioning at all. Only about 9 per cent of the largest schools did not use sectioning, but 27 per cent of the smallest did not. Likewise, only 15 per cent of the forty publicly-controlled institutions reported no selective sectioning, as compared to 24 per cent of the twenty-nine private colleges. Apparently, then, selective sectioning in FE becomes more necessary as the total group (and probably class size) increases, and as institutional

⁴Throughout this report percentages are given to the nearest round figure as convenient approximations only.

admission is less selective. In the 1953 list, all but two of the twenty-six schools used placement tests, and eight schools enrolling over 1000 in FE sectioned students on the basis of these tests, while only two with less than 500 did so.

Remedial programs. By far the most common fractionation of the FE group was into special remedial classes or groups, with forty-six (66 per cent) of the seventy institutions questioned in 1954 having some type of remedial program for the weakest students. In sixteen schools this was the only type of sectioning normally followed. In the 1953 sample, of twenty-six schools sixteen (62 per cent) had definite remedial English programs. Of fourteen departments registering more than 700 freshmen, only two did not have a specific remedial plan; of the eleven with 600 or fewer, only four did have one.

Remedial programs vary widely.⁵ Again in the 1953 survey, five schools segregated remedial cases into sections of the regular course, seven set up special classes. Eight institutions employed remedial clinics, some for separate registration and others as supplementary to regular FE courses, and two reported a system of tutorial aid. Several schools had a series or combination of regularly-offered courses into which a student entered at the appropriate level and from which he emerged or was excused upon adequate achievement. In only three cases were special teachers aside from the regular English department staff em-

ployed. The clinic procedure was evenly distributed over departments of all sizes, from the largest (2569 freshmen in English) to nearly the smallest (185 freshmen). In a number of cases it was supplemented by reading, speech, and arithmetic clinics in the school, and one department was contemplating a spelling clinic. Four remedial programs stressed grammar, nine mechanics, fifteen writing practice, seven reading, one speech and one listening (both in communications programs), while two schools had special work for foreign students. Five (all large) departments made remedial work prerequisite to the regular course (all have special or segregated classes), and four of these gave college credit for such remedial work (but only two counted it toward the degree). Only two schools permitted remedial work to replace the regular course (both have special sections). Twelve institutions scheduled the remedial work concurrently with the regular course (all but two of these had clinics), apparently by adding one or two extra periods each week. Most of the institutions in this 1953 survey indicated satisfaction with their remedial programs.

Although it may appear that the superior student is forgotten, actually most schools which give placement tests provide for such persons to move quickly to advanced courses, or have special "fast" sections. The administrative problems with this group are blessedly few.

II

Proficiency in composition. It is clear that, so far as organization goes, the English department still shoulders the bulk of the responsibility in most colleges for students' writing habits. Only nineteen (27 per cent) of the seventy schools of the 1954 survey reported the existence of a college or university-wide organization concerned with standards and practices of student writing. These were pro-

⁵A survey of "Remedial English Practices in Random Selected Universities," (mimeographed) conducted in 1953 by Dean William S. Guthrie of Ohio State University and answered by sixteen college deans revealed a variety of course types, credit arrangements, placement procedures, percent of freshmen placed in remedial courses, extra fees charged, and methods of acceleration for superior students. This study showed that ten of the twelve schools which had a remedial course ordinarily did not give credit toward a degree for it. Two charged a fee. Percentages of freshmen placed in the remedial course ranged from 5 to 52 per cent.

portionately divided among the three size groups. Twelve of the nineteen institutional bodies were permanent in nature, and fifteen were faculty-wide in make-up. In no case did such a body exert any control over the Freshman English courses. Perhaps this is a matter which needs further study: departmental sovereignty may be alienating seriously needed support by the entire faculty group.

In a relatively few schools the English department administered proficiency examinations in written English to all or part of the upper class student body. Of the twenty-six departments reporting practices in 1953, only two gave such a test to all students before graduation, but one other required it for all students with grades below C in Freshman English courses, and three had it for one college (one L.A., two Education), while still another demanded it upon referral by any faculty member. Still another institution expected to institute such a test, and three had course arrangements which seem to carry deficient students into their junior year and thus secure proficiency judgment at that stage. Two respondents added notes questioning spot proficiency examinations and urging involvement of the entire faculty body in identifying students who need additional training before graduation. Although no direct question was asked in the 1954 questionnaire about this practice, Ohio University, the University of Kansas, and Loyola University volunteered details of their plans, and Baylor University reported an intensive study of the upper and lower groups.

However, the problem of the student who has "passed" Freshman English and then later appears deficient in writing skill is apparently a common one. This is understandable since a grade of D is passing in all but a few institutions. Solutions reported by the 1954 group were varied: a remedial (13), a course

in advanced composition (12), a writing laboratory (7), a writing clinic (6), repeating Freshman English (2), a tutor (2), a course in creative writing (1), a course in advanced grammar (1), special help by individual English department members (1). Twelve respondents simply said that no provisions were made for such cases, although several added a note of lament about it.

III

Administrative structure. It is obvious that personalities and local tradition often determine the structure of an English department. Yet the 1954 survey showed a number of definite patterns in the administration of FE. Seventeen (24 per cent) of the seventy chairmen of departments assumed the major role in directing FE; but only four (11 per cent) in the large departments (Group III) did so, while four of eleven (36 per cent) in Group I took this responsibility. Two chairmen reported extra pay, and fourteen reduction in teaching load specifically for this duty. Many of these chairmen were aided by a departmental committee, with, it may be assumed, more or less delegation of tasks. One happy department with a rotating chairmanship reported a virtually even division of labor among the entire staff of professors, with little need for administrative direction.

Eight other departments (11 per cent) replied that the administration of the FE program was handled by a committee. In four cases (all in Group III) the chairman of this committee was given a reduction of teaching assignment of one-fourth to one-half.

Two (3 per cent) Group III schools answered that the FE program was under a communications unit separate from the English department, with a coordinator who had a reduced teaching load; and one other institution reported such

a separate unit in addition to the English department program.

By far the most frequent plan of administration was that centering about a specifically designated director of FE. Forty-three (61 per cent) of the seventy schools had such a position, five in Group I (45 per cent), sixteen in Group II (65 per cent), and twenty-two in Group III (65 per cent). Two schools reported extra pay for this position, and thirty-four (79 per cent) a reduced teaching load of from one-fourth to two-thirds, with the majority at the former figure. Again, it was apparent that the director often headed a committee which shared his responsibility.

When asked whether a program handling 1000 or more students needed a specific director of FE, the respondents were preponderantly in the affirmative, with only three definitely opposed, and several others stating a preference for a committee. When asked to comment on possible dangers, they generally agreed that success demanded discretion and cooperation. A few comments, expressing most of the different views, were as follows:

... In a large department some of the administrative functions must necessarily be delegated, but unless the lines are kept open to the main office, the subdivisions may tend to become independent and set up their own administrative routines and office staffs. Such fragmentation is costly, cumbersome to the institution as a whole, and damaging to the extent that the head of the department and the senior members of the staff are separated from direct responsibility for the composition course.

The head system usually leads to an attempt to hire cheap help and then let the head do the thinking for the whole course. In the process, he often becomes arbitrary. Also, because they have not participated in thinking out the course, the instructors are likely to teach far below their abilities. ... There is always the chance of a head who will start riding some more or less fantastic hobby horse. Even a good head is no substitute for first-class instructors.

The departments of English should not be divided into departments of English composition and of English literature. Such a division would imply that freshmen, who constitute most of the composition classes, are less important than sophomores or seniors. It would imply that a sound knowledge of literature and of the history of the English language is not necessary for, or an integral part of, the teaching of composition. Both implications, I feel, are false.

I see no danger if the Director shares his power with a committee or the whole staff.

I believe that such a position enables someone to direct and coordinate the courses in Freshman English and to train new teachers. One danger, however, is that the director will assume too much responsibility ...

Administrative tasks. Finally, in an effort to discover where functions of the FE program might best be handled in the English department, a list of forty-three items was presented in the 1954 questionnaire, with the request to check the agency normally responsible for handling each. Only certain significant trends can profitably be reported. Clearly thought to be largely the responsibility of the chairman were coordinating of supplies and interdepartmental plans, balancing and adding or dropping sections, handling student complaints, making all decisions about staff members, and representing the department. Especially delegated to the director of FE might be writing and judicating the syllabus, ordering books and desk copies, achieving routine coordination, reassigning students with class changes, studying grade distribution, assisting new instructors, and investigating problems in the program. A committee's assistance was preferred for developing the syllabus, surveying new texts and selecting other materials. The entire staff was thought to be best for selecting the text, and determining policies for proficiency and grading standards. Each individual instructor was believed the most logical authority in choosing teaching aids, and

in handling plagiarism and requests for help. There was a significant negative response to the practice of supervision by class visitation. It should be noted that

most respondents checked two or three agencies to handle a number of the items, clearly showing a general sharing of responsibility in the typical department.

Prolegomenon to Future Communication Metaphysics¹

GEORGE KELLY²

While the modes of contemporary communication courses are manifestly various and disparate, the educational conditions, which call into being and continuously delimit these modes, appear to be relatively stable. One could contend that this relative stability of educational conditions results from the reluctance of our society to fully accept and adjust to the peculiar economic and social novelties which characterize the contemporary scene. It is perhaps too much to expect a people to acquiesce readily to the degeneration of their traditions until both their acquiescence and the traditions have been comfortably distorted into amiable and expedient fictions. For example, people will continue to confuse education and democracy until the mythic signification of these terms being yoked together is everywhere confronted with substantial contradiction. Then, through their intellectual incapacity to tolerate a sustained irony, they will construct equally fictional but more comfortable indexes for these terms. But while the educational conditions which initiate and sustain the modes of communication courses are stabilized by mass inertia, they are not unchanging. They change slowly, reflecting the gradual revelation of economic and social

necessity which is impressed upon the public consciousness and which gradually finds expression in public action. Thus the actually changing conditions of education are apparently stable only in so far as change is somewhat compulsively ignored and then only relatively so.

Now the modes of current communication courses are more conscious and immediate artifacts, designed to control or at least rationalize the conditions which call them into being and which are, themselves, socially and economically predetermined. The modes are the creations of an intelligentsia who are partially aware of their traditional roles as innovators. But even their partial awareness is constrained and turned from insight by the coercions of an elite which they justifiably fear and incongruously imitate. Thus their creations must and do reflect the sterile vocationalism of minds in service. But here illusion complements reality. True innovation being impossible for the mind which is half in service to the corporate ideology, the intelligentsia, the creators of the modes, content themselves with an approximation of their historical role as innovators: They create apparent novelties. And this, though desperate, is wisdom; for nothing is so much despised as a succession of real novelties, each of which informs us of our lack of vision; and nothing is so much admired as a succession of apparent novelties in which we recognize at

¹A paper given as part of a panel discussion on "Recent Developments in Communication Courses," at the CCCC Spring Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, March 4, 5, and 6, 1954.

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second glance merely a retelling of our own insights. But while apparent novelty initially pleases, it subsequently palls, thereby creating demand through obsolescence. The result is enormous activity on the part of the intelligentsia—a multiplication of new texts and new programs for communication.

And all this while the really dynamic conditions which call into being the many modes of communications programs appear as stable. There is always the society which surrounds, supports, and struggles against the institution of higher learning. The institution itself—university, liberal arts college, teachers college—seems equally a constant. So too do the two other components of the conditions—the teaching staff and the student. But only as class terms are they constant. Like Heraclitian rivers, they are nominally changeless, perceptually constant, substantially in endless flux. It is that fluctuating substance that the innovators do not see, or fail at least to see in the proper sense of immediacy. Yet it is really the immediate character of the substance which we must accept as the primary limiting conditions which restrict both the artificers and their artifacts.

To analyze the substance and the character of the educational conditions—the society, the university, the teaching staff, and the student—is to fix the limits of whichever of the contemporary modes of communications courses we pin our hopes upon. Let it be understood, however, that this paper does not pretend to anything so fulsome as a sociological analysis. What is intended here is merely an existentialist prolegomenon to any future communications metaphysics.

Shortly before his death A. E. Robinson wrote to an old friend, "The more I try to make a picture of this world for the next hundred years, the more I don't like it, and the gladder I am that I shall be out of it." That world of the next hun-

dred years, which Robinson got out of and which we are in, is the new garrison state; a place where happiness becomes morale, people become personnel, mistakes become subversion, and dissent becomes treason. But these are commonplaces and merely transformations of a moribund tradition. They discomfort us, if they do, because we are old parties, the fossilized remnants of a once bright and compassionate age which is now as dead as WPA and Glenn Miller. The more concrete unrealities of the new society—centralization, permanent inflation, the tax load, increasing corporate control, bureaucratic rationalization of occupations, the new military elite, the vital role of patriotic waste in the new split economy, permanently subsidized agriculture and industry—all of these, for example, we more readily accept. We retain, of course, our half-hearted proviso, the demi-myth which has a credibility status like that of the second coming or the withering away of the state, namely, that these unpleasanties will pass in our time. Perhaps they will in the long run, but J. M. Keynes has told us with certainty what happens in the long run. On the contrary, I do not think that we, as professionally thoughtful people, can dismiss these recent changes in economic, social, and political life as mere temporary dislocations. They are the new reality and as attributes they define at least in part the garrison state, the new society which surrounds, supports, and struggles with the institution of higher learning. We can either ignore, support, or resist this new society, but we cannot responsibly construct communication ideologies about or within any society other than the present society.

The institution of higher learning (and the state university is the most typical) is committed through its dependence upon the regents or state board of education and the state legislature, toward supporting that picture of society which

those organizations most admire; and it must, as well, reflect the dominant interests of the real society. We are all familiar with the strange reflection which the democratic mythos has cast upon the hierarchic structure of the state university. And we should recognize too that for many years now the increasing vocationalism of the state university has reflected the interests of the corporate elite. But only recently has the changing character of the interests of that elite manifested itself. The recent shift by the universities toward General Education is the educational response to one of the most important shifts in the new society—the bureaucratic rationalization of occupations and professions. The universities have dutifully produced in greater and greater volumes vocationally trained graduates; yet at the same time the number of suitable occupational opportunities has not kept pace proportionately, and, what is more significant, the character of the positions has been increasingly simplified through bureaucratic rationalization—one of the principal advances of contemporary administrative science. Today, in addition to vocational skill, which has become increasingly trivial through the simplification of tasks, two new objectives of education have become increasingly important. Since the rise of the personality market, the well rounded, generally informed, smooth, articulate, and communicative graduate is now the product demanded by the corporate monopsonists who determine our production. The curriculum artificers, quickened by their symbiotic relationship to the corporate elite, have responded with the by now respectably established General Education programs. Courses such as Western Civilization, Man and Society, Music Appreciation, World Literature, and General Humanities impart the gloss of urbanity, the well rounded manner, and the indications of wide interests—in short, Kulcha *qua*

commodity. Communication courses provide the tools for the manipulation of human relations, the security of the standard dialect, and the all-important ability to see-a-point or to get-across-an-idea. To be sure, they do other things too, but these functions derive most directly from the force of the corporate monopsony. (Compare, for example, the most recent statements by the spokesmen of the great corporations on what they expect from college graduates apropos of communication.)

Thus it is that the unseen hand directs the institution of higher learning, determining its product and limiting its range of action. The mass of society, voters, indignant parents, patriotic congressmen, vigilant newspapers, sensitized veterans' organizations—these, too, restrict and limit the university in the garison state; but despite the maudlin and ironic concern over academic freedom, these latter forces only modify our actions in communication; they do not determine them.

The staff of the communications program has a somewhat complicated part to play in the educational conditions which surround the communication course. It is a part of the society and it is a part of the institution; it is an entity in itself, and along with the students it processes, it is the communications program. In the large scale communications program the staff can be classified into pretty standard echelons: the head of the program, usually two or three bright young men with administrative ambitions, a number of full time instructors pecking away at their doctoral dissertations, and a number of graduate assistants working their way through college and learning a trade. Interaction within this hierarchy has much of the rationalized fluidity of the modern corporate sales force even though it is complicated by the persistent myth of democratic administration, an inheri-

tance from the institutional myth which is itself an illegitimate imposition of the societal myth. Moreover, members of the staff at all levels, even the Merlins who can read their fates, participate in society and are at once its victims and its henchmen. Both the microcosmic reflection of the outside world, which the university presents, and the outside world itself inform the staff daily by subtle promptings and direct statement that they are involved in and directed by the complex forces of the new society. The flight from inflation, the quest for status, the compulsions toward vocationalism, though softened by the pale blue light of culture, are part of the permanent realities of the entire communications staff.

The role of the head is properly the most complex and ambiguous. As an administrator his relationship to his institution is frequently a difficult one. Since the communications course is frequently interdepartmental, and since it is more often than not the biggest course in the institution, institutional power and prestige accrue to its director. But since the course is relatively new in the university's curriculum, the director is usually trained in an area of peripheral relation to communication, and is thus compelled to create his own learned identity. Moreover, in the constant power struggle of the microcosm, the relative newness of communications and its more open identification with vocationalism are likely to gain for him from his more traditionally oriented colleagues the combined stigmata of parvenu and empire-builder. He is willy-nilly involved in the ruthless interplay of faculty politics and at an uncomfortably high level; consequently a good deal of his psychic energy and an untoward amount of his time must be diverted toward having a going concern and defending his boundaries. This intramural dissipation is accomplished by his involuntary dependence upon the corporate ideology. His acceptance of

vocationalism dedicates him to serving rather than to directing society and imposes upon him the strictures of the society's increasingly unwieldy mythos as well as the increasingly unpalatable norms of the ethical superstructure for the new economy. Such pressure is most frequently accommodated by the quasi-traditional pose of academic objectivity.

But perhaps the most painful problem which confronts the head is this: Despite the institutional importance of the communications course, it is staffed by the least informed, and the least experienced body of instructors. The problem becomes a dilemma for the head when he realizes that however much he may want to improve the quality of instruction in his staff, the economic structure of the university obviates the only line of action that promises success. He cannot change the character of his staff because the funds allocated to him are sufficient to attract among the good candidates only those who are willing to undergo a semi-exploitation of their time in hopes of gaining deferred favors. This forces him deeper into his dilemma; because in order to compensate for the inexperience of his temporary personnel and the generally low level of intellection in his semi-permanent personnel, he must increasingly rationalize procedures and techniques. And this in turn diminishes the attractiveness of his program to the more competent and intellectually alive members of the peripheral disciplines who might have been interested in teaching communications, if it had in the first place offered income, prestige, and interest.

It is this bureaucratic rationalization which, though prompted by the necessity of offering vocational service of a uniformly high level, so often passes for the proper function of innovation. In so far as the head is also the creator of the modes of communication courses, his efforts in this direction suffer a further

diffusion. He recognizes as an intelligent man that any program, however thorough its bureaucratic rationalization, is in the final analysis only as good as its teachers; yet he must content himself frequently with the pale satisfaction of a team which exists only on paper. His efforts at innovation are subconsciously diverted by his indirect service to the supporting elite whose interests, being centered in self-perpetuation, are profoundly anti-intellectual. What then passes for innovation in whatever area it fixes upon for its mode—semiotics, linguistics, mass media, or life-orientation, is eventually directed toward serving society rather than shaping it.

If the head finds his actions and creativity everywhere limited by the institution and the society, what then can be said of the staff? Young men and young women, beguiled by their fondness for books, sweating it out on the lowest level of academic income, tottering insecurely in their partial accent toward professional status, and occupying the lowest rung of the prestige ladder in the university—these the microcosm more nearly chokes than limits. As a rule they are professionally trained in the interdepartmental periphery and what degree of expert knowledge they possess is only casually related to their teaching. Nor does the recent trend promoted by such men as Professor Harold Allen constitute much promise of deliverance. Training to the point of the Ph.D. in communication may be applauded as a long overdue attempt to provide the freshman teacher with a learned content of his own, or it may equally be regarded as another instance of bureaucratic rationalization, like the creation of the dental hygienist and the laboratory technician in the medical arts or the move to split the engineering profession into practical and theoretical engineers.

It seems to me unlikely that either

talent or prestige will accrue readily to that teaching which is restricted to the greatest quantity and quality of the collective student mind. On the contrary, the creation of the professional communications teacher appears to be simply another subtle evidence of increasing technocracy and mass production—industrial downgrading. It is also another step in the abdication of responsible leadership which has characterized the learned elite. Their refusal to participate in the intellectually unrewarding chores of freshman teaching is now coupled with efforts to create a class of academic *untermenchen* to take over the freshman year. Thus those who could lead decline to, and leadership falls to those who cannot lead but merely serve. And everyone knows what happens to servants; we have only to look at the high school teachers.

As nurtured by either vocationally trained or untrained parents, as processed by the mass media, and as presented by the service-dedicated public school system, the university freshman embodies most of the limitations which the garrison state imposes on any attempts at innovation. In gross quantity alone he presents an economic problem for the communications course. His numbers swell the class lists in programs which depend upon the intimate instruction of small groups as the means to a total re-orientation of linguistic practices. The same numbers by creating additional demand for instructors at relatively inelastic budget conditions, fragment the total fund of wages. And they burden the staff with an endless procession of papers, which, by virtue of sectioning (a form of bureaucratic rationalization), all present the same dead level of mediocrity.

However, the real limitations imposed by the student derive not so much from numbers as they do from quality. Whatever mode of communication course he

enters into, the university freshman brings with him all the limitations of contemporary American culture crystallized into classic simplicity in a mind as yet unencumbered by the more baroque effects of education and frustration. And this simplicity presents exceedingly different problems in reconstruction, for it is a tangled simplicity, a web of transparent myth, incommunicable and non-referential signs woven by the amoral vendors of mass communication, and mended daily by mass education which perpetuates the infirm glory of all the positive catchwords that substitute for thought—Success, Democracy, Brotherhood, Security, Opportunity, Happiness, Adjustment. Devoid of tradition and with the barest smattering of information, inarticulate and semi-literate, the student comes to the university to learn a trade and acquire sufficient gloss to be a product in the personality market. The communications program, designed as it is with an eye to vocational needs, must stoop to conquer. To reach him at all it descends more and more to his level. (For example, compare the most recent texts with those of five or ten years past.) And this descent is a limitation of great significance because it determines the tonality of the modes such that they have this in common, however much they differ: they simplify to the point of triviality. And it is my own reluctant opinion that outside of a few minor reforms in diction, sentence structure, and dialect, and the learning of a few superficial devices for organization, and the picking up of the jargon of the mode, we touch him very little. He leaves the communication course as adjusted to the garrison state as when he entered—perhaps more so.

If one should doubt the ultimate practicality of unadjusting that part of society which passes through our hands, he might reflect on the delicate balance between the uneasy stability of the garrison state and the unutterable horror of Armageddon toward which the garrison state tends.

The same young man who sat in our class room with such good-natured resistance to our efforts to improve his syntax and order his cause and effect organization, who made a middle C in communications, played for two years third-string right halfback, and was the house steward for Gamma chapter of Beta Theta Pi, and who just yesterday received his reserve commission in the Air Force; this same young man might unleash upon the world the power that moves the stars. The word that takes concretion in his ultimate act may begin nowhere and all at once. Taken up by the press, it will be hurled transformed by the demagogue into the tin ear of the great Presbyterian and from there tendered respectfully to the man higher up. The simple directive which results will originate in the moral outrage of a reader of westerns, and it will pass down through the spirals of command, initiating as it passes all the wondrous complexity of action and interaction of modern technology. It will arrive intact and the same young man will carry-out his orders—a triumph of modern communication; all down the line no one said no.

Such then are the limitations imposed upon the modes of the communication courses by their conditions. Recent and future trends in communications in so far as they operate within these conditions constitute only apparent innovations.

Teaching Outlining: A Method

VIOLA K. RIVENBURGH¹

"I make my outline after I write my theme."

"Writing a sentence outline is beyond me."

"I don't know what I am going to say until I say it."

Such statements as these will sound familiar to the college instructor of freshman composition. He finds that students consciously or subconsciously resist the requirement of organizing their ideas before they begin to write. The good student thinks it unnecessary; the poor one thinks it next to impossible. The process of subdividing a thesis idea is not an easy one as it involves logical thinking of which the freshman has done very little. But I should like to suggest a method designed to overcome initial frustrations while attempting it.

Numerous articles have been written concerning different techniques for teaching organization, so many in fact that the instructor is often confused by the very number of ideas suggested. To combat these problems, I have worked out and shall confine myself here to a brief explanation of what has become a somewhat standardized and successful class experiment. It usually requires some preliminary work before the term begins, but there is a resultant gain apparent later in the lessened difficulty in breaking down and organizing abstract material methodically. Since the teaching material can be mimeographed, it can be used at any time by any one with an almost unvaried class procedure.

The first step to be taken before the term begins is a careful survey of essays usually assigned for class reading.

I hope to find one which meets the following requirements: it must be concisely and vividly written, with good specific detail building up well developed paragraphs; and, most important, it must be one which outlines easily with at least one-third degree or tertiary division.

The next step is to make a sentence outline of the chosen essay. The sentences, including the thesis, are then scrambled and numbered, but not arranged in outline form. I have the required number of these scrambled outlines mimeographed for classroom use.

Quite early in the term I have stressed the necessity of limiting the scope of a subject to be used by the students for a written paper; of phrasing a single clear-cut unified sentence—a general statement which includes all the subordinate points the writer wishes to make to the reader—before beginning any logical analysis of a subject. I am interested at this point in organizing the students' own thinking, not so much in the methods he will use. With such a sentence as the above in mind, I suggest that the students think of themselves as sitting at a desk sorting their ideas into cubby holes labeled Who, What, When, Why, How Valuable or Of What Use is This, etc. There are the questions most helpful in subject analysis, the ones which the reader would need to have answered about it, and they will often suggest the pattern to be used in the Definition (Who), Process (How), Cause and Effect (Why) essays, as well as, quite often, the order to be followed in any given pattern.

During the class period succeeding the above discussion, I introduce the subject which is the topic of my chosen essay and its scrambled outline. After some

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lively debate, I ask one of the students who has shown some ability in organizing, to phrase a sentence which expresses the main point the class has made concerning the subject under discussion. I suggest that it be a very general statement which includes, at least by implication, all the important subordinate ideas which have been presented. When this sentence has been phrased, I write it on the board as well as the main division headings suggested as they grow out of the discussion. Writing down the subdivisions with the correct symbols and indentation helps to fix the correct form of the outline in the students' minds. Analyzing and outlining a subject has aroused interest in it. I now ask, as the next assignment, that the students read the essay I have chosen to see how a well-known author feels about and has handled the same subject.

The next step follows in the succeeding class period when I use the scrambled outline of this essay which I have previously prepared. The students are requested to note down the numbers of the sentences on a piece of paper grouping them in conventional outline form.

Having already discovered the author's main points, this task is not too difficult for even the poorest student, and the exercise is usually finished in from ten to fifteen minutes. The class is quick to note the variations in points they have made concerning the subject with those of the author. This exercise leads to a discussion of the author's method of attack: the pattern used as a result of the Who, What, When, and other questions his essay has answered.

Now the ice has been broken. The student has applied the process of subdivision to a thesis idea; he has unscrambled the outline of an essay written by a professional writer on the same subject; he has discussed and worked with the formal outline pattern. A number of things have become evident to him: that even the most professional of writers rely upon a well-planned outline; that the outline represents the analysis of an idea, the skeleton plan from which to write. Most students now see the outline not as a general nuisance, but as something they can rely on to help them to organize their ideas for any paper they have to write.

NSSC News

JEAN MALMSTROM¹

The *NSSC Newsletter* is distributed only to members of the organization, as a perquisite of membership. Published four times a year, in February, May, October, and December, it supplements the *Journal of Communication* by keeping members posted on NSSC activities by means of brief, informative articles and topical news items concerning communication. Readers are constantly urged to send in news items about the ideas and activities of members; chapter and com-

mittee projects and new books on communication are regularly reported. The tone of the *Newsletter* is strictly journalistic, not scholarly. Thus it can include information which by its nature is not suitable for the *Journal* but which is important for members to know.

Since the *Newsletter* appears between issues of the *Journal*, it intensifies communication among members of NSSC. In addition, it facilitates the distribution of operating information essential to efficient membership in the organization.

¹Western Michigan College

For instance, the February 1, 1955, *Newsletter* contained an unabridged copy of the fourth revision of the NSSC Constitution and By-Laws as adopted at the annual business meeting of the Society held in Chicago December 28, 1954; the May 1, 1955, *Newsletter* included an insert of the 1955 Directory of NSSC Members.

The need for such a publication was recognized by Herold Lillywhite when he was NSSC president in 1953. In his first *News Letter* he said: "Many members of NSSC have suggested that periodic reports direct to the members, on the affairs of the Society, would do much for better understanding and closer cooperation. Since I am much in agreement with this suggestion, I am undertaking to make such a report in the form of our first NEWS LETTER, which I hope will become a regular issue of the Society in the future."

Donald Bird has made this hope a reality. Since he became executive secretary of NSSC in December, 1953, he has developed the publication from its mimeographed infancy, through its multilithed adolescence to its present slick-

papered, printed maturity. In its 1955 format the *Newsletter* is as pleasing to the eyes and hands as it is informative to the mind. Professor Bird underlined this progress by stating in the first printed issue (February 1, 1955): "... to have this publication grow from a multilithed periodical into a full-blown printed house organ indicates our coming of age as an organization."

Obviously the value of a similar publication for CCCC can hardly be questioned. As things stand now, the only up-to-date directory of CCCC membership is the mailing list for the *CCC Bulletin*, a few copies of which reach CCCC officers. News of the activities of CCCC members spreads by word of mouth haphazardly. Stay-at-home CCCC'ers must wait till February to read in the *Bulletin* about what happened at the business meeting in November.

On the other hand, the difficulties of establishing a similar publication are equally obvious. There are the problems of time, money, and facilities. There is also the extreme difficulty of finding another person with the energy and efficiency of Don Bird.

The CCCC and the NCTE

J. N. Hook¹

In my little home town the owner of the furniture store, a man named Obie, was also the undertaker. His window displays, by present standards, were a bit odd. Sometimes the latest in coffins sat beside the latest in children's furniture. Appropriately, Obie's proud slogan marched in tall gold letters across the window: "Service from the Cradle to the Grave."

¹Executive Secretary, The National Council of Teachers of English, and Treasurer, Conference on College Composition and Communication.

The service of the National Council of Teachers of English to America's youth doesn't start directly as soon as Obie's, but it does begin the day a child enters kindergarten. The child's kindergarten and elementary teachers probably used the Council's *Language Arts for Today's Children* as a text or reference book in college, probably now read *Elementary English* to keep up with professional news and ideas, probably own one or a dozen Council pamphlets, and, if not members of the Council, are at least like-

ly to be members of educational groups whose philosophy and practices have been influenced by the NCTE. In elementary school the child perhaps learns reading, writing, speaking, and listening via methods more or less recommended by the Council; he reads books praised in Council reading lists; he hears recordings, sees filmstrips, and looks at pictures and maps endorsed by the Council.

In junior and senior high school the youngster has English teachers who, more than likely, have also been nurtured on NCTE publications, including *The English Journal*, which someone has called the professional magazine most widely read *voluntarily*. The Council's curriculum volumes, its pamphlets, and its numerous committee projects have also been part of the teacher's sustenance. Because of Council committee work, the child learns something about evaluating movies, writing for school papers, and judging TV and radio programs, as well as the more basic skills involved in communication. Once more he is exposed to audio-visual aids prepared or endorsed by the Council, and he reads books recommended in the junior and senior high school book lists.

In college the student is still subject to Council influence if his freshman English instructor is a member of CCCC, an integral part of the Council's college section. Even if the instructor is not a member, the content and presentation in textbooks that he uses were probably affected by articles published in CCC and by talks and discussions at the annual conference, for nearly all authors of today's freshman texts are active in CCCC.

After his freshman year, if the student takes more work in English, some of his professors probably rely upon *College English* as one of their sources of information and ideas; some are influenced by the findings and recommendations of such Council committees as those deal-

ing with college English for non-major students, comparative literature, and approaches to literature; some professors use audio-visual aids distributed by the Council. If the student himself decides to become an English teacher, the Council has an indirect voice, through its curriculum volumes and its Committee on the Preparation and Certification of Teachers of English, in determining the kind of preparation that he receives.

The Council's responsibility to American youth is tremendous. None of its members or officers may take its work lightly. How well American citizens can write, read, speak, and listen—even how well they can think—will be determined to no small extent by the wisdom and effectiveness of the Council's activities. Through all the years that a young person is in school the Council's role in his life is significant, even though he has never heard of the NCTE. And in his adult life, the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that he has learned in English classes will help to define his individual contribution to society.

Every year in a young person's education is a critical year, a potential turning point. Three or four years, however, are usually the most critical. These are the transition periods: the first year in school, the first year in junior high school, and the first year in college. What happens to the student in each of those years may have a profound effect upon the remainder of his academic career and therefore upon his life.

At present the Council pays specific attention to only one of these critical years: the freshman year in college. The Conference on College Composition and Communication was organized within the Council because many Council members recognized the need for intensive study of what happens and what should happen to a student's English when he makes the transition from high school to college. Eventually, equally searching at-

tention may be paid to each of the other critical years.

The CCCC, then, has a highly significant function. It is impossible to think of the Council's whole purpose without thinking of the student's English in the 13th grade.

But it is no less impossible to think of the 13th grade as existing in a vacuum. Someone has taught the student something before he becomes a college freshman, although, regardless of the extent of his preparation, we shall always say that he has not been taught enough; someone else may have the opportunity to teach him more, although his next teacher will always say that we, too, have not prepared him sufficiently well. The more those who teach freshman English know about the student's previous preparation and future needs, the more effective their work is likely to be. The better informed they are about the Council's entire program, the more able they will be to help all their students in a difficult transitional period.

The CCCC is unique among Council groups in that it holds a large annual meeting of its own, independent of the Council's convention, and unique also in that it has its own periodical publication. It elects Council Directors and has its own elected officers, its own Executive Committee, and its own Constitution. Since an NCTE constitutional amendment passed in 1954, the CCCC has become the one Council group that chooses a member of one of the policy-advising Section Committees. Thus the CCCC functions as a semi-autonomous group within the Council, and functions also as a body that shares importantly in the government of the Council.

The NCTE has about 130 affiliates. But the CCCC is not to be regarded as one of these. The affiliates are normally local organizations, serving local groups of teachers who may or may not be members of the Council. The word *affiliate*

derives from the Latin *affiliatus*, meaning adopted son. The affiliates are adopted organizations, assisted and loved and needed by the Council, but they are not "blood relatives."

The CCCC, in contrast, is national in scope, as is the parent NCTE. The CCCC is a child of the Council, a blood relative, a responsible part of the intimate family circle. A noun such as *filiate* might describe its relationship, but not *affiliate*.

Every good child helps his parents, and every good parent helps his children. In brief the Council office performs these services for the CCCC: Opens the mail and reads and channels it; answers all circulation queries; asks for additional money when amount sent is too short, refunds overage when amount sent is too large; supplies and cuts an addressing stencil for each member, prints and prepares a record card for each, prints and prepares a membership card for each; addresses four envelopes for mailing four issues of the magazine; pulls stencils at expiration time and runs renewal notices to be inserted in envelopes and mailed, sends second notices at second month if not renewed, sends third notices at third month if not renewed; makes changes of address when necessary; fills orders for single copies or back issues; conducts correspondence concerning CCCC membership; prepares lists of CCCC members for the CCCC Executive Committee, as well as for railroads and airlines before the CCCC spring meetings; includes CCCC in all pertinent promotional activities; keeps circulation records; keeps financial records; banks CCCC money; and pays for an annual audit. These operations require part of the time of ten Council employees. If one person could do all the work, it would probably take nearly all of that person's time.

It is through the cooperation of all College Section Council members, including all members of CCCC, that their

common purposes can be realized. Article III of the NCTE Constitution says: "The purpose of this Association is to improve the quality of instruction in English at all educational levels; to encourage research, experimentation, and investigation in the teaching of English; to facilitate professional cooperation of the members; to hold public discussions and programs; to sponsor the publication of desirable articles and reports; and to integrate the efforts of all those who are concerned with the improve-

ment of instruction in English." Article I of the CCCC Constitution states: "The broad object of the CCCC is to unite teachers of college composition and communication in an organization which can consider all matters relevant to their teaching, including teachers, subject-matter, administration, methods, and students." These objectives are unquestionably desirable, and through continuous working together as a family unit, the NCTE and the CCCC can go far toward attaining them.

Six-Year History of the CCCC

JEROME W. ARCHER¹

At the beginning of the last decade, a variety of conditions converged to suggest the need for uniting persons interested in and responsible for the teaching of the skills and arts of communication: writing, reading, and speaking, in our colleges and universities, particularly in the freshman courses. Increasing enrollments were requiring the further development of qualified teachers. Doubt was being voiced as to the full adequacy of the graduate training of prospective teachers of English—most of whom would devote much of their college teaching career to composition and communication: in many colleges and universities as much as four-fifths of all English teaching is in the c/c courses. The impact of the linguisticians upon the teaching of our language, the development of various kinds of communication programs, and, particularly, the need for a fuller recognition of the professional significance of effective teaching and research in the c/c field—these were more of the conditions and problems which led to the formal organization of the Conference on

College Composition and Communication six years ago.

At the Buffalo 1949 convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, upon the recommendation of college teachers there, the Conference on College Composition and Communication was formally established and approved by the Executive Committee of the Council.² The Conference was authorized to elect its own officers (except that the treasurer of the Council was to be the treasurer of the Conference), to hold its annual business meeting in November at the time of the Council convention, to offer its own separate national or regional meetings in the spring of each year, and to publish its own journal, a quarterly, *College Composition and Communication*. Since 1949, CCCC has been a group within the NCTE, for two three-

²Before this formal organization, two conferences in Chicago, one in February, 1947, sponsored by the Council and the Speech Association of America, and one in April, 1949, sponsored by the Council, had prepared the way and signalized the need for a permanent society. For a more detailed account of the early years, see John C. Gerber, "Three-Year History of the CCCC," CCC, III (October, 1952), 17, 18.

¹Marquette University

year periods. At the present time, an amendment to the NCTE Constitution is being prepared to give permanent status to CCCC within the Council.³

At the Buffalo 1949 meeting, the first CCCC officers (for 1950) were elected: John C. Gerber (State University of Iowa), chairman; George S. Wykoff (Purdue University), secretary; W. Wilbur Hatfield, treasurer (*ex officio*); and Charles W. Roberts (University of Illinois), editor. These officers appointed an executive committee of twenty-six members distributed geographically and institutionally. Under these officers, in 1950, the membership grew to 550, and a national meeting attended by more than 500 persons was held in March, 1950, in Chicago. In the same month appeared the first issue of the quarterly journal, CCC.

Since then, CCCC chairmen have been: George S. Wykoff (Purdue University), 1951; Harold B. Allen (University of Minnesota), 1952; Karl W. Dykema (Youngstown College), 1953; T. A. Barnhart (State Teachers College, St. Cloud, Minnesota), 1954; Jerome W. Archer (Marquette University), 1955; and Irwin Griggs (Temple University), elected for 1956. National meetings, including general sessions, panel discussions, and workshops, have been held each spring: 1951, Chicago; 1952, Cleveland; 1953, Chicago; 1954, St. Louis; 1955, Chicago—each under the direction of, respectively, the then CCCC associate chairmen, Messrs. Allen, Dykema, Barnhart, Archer, and Griggs; and the 1956 Spring Meeting in New York, under the direction of Francis Shoemaker (Teachers College, Columbia University), associate chairman for 1956. The annual fall business meetings, along with a luncheon meeting and program, have been held at the time of the Council conventions: Milwaukee, 1950; Cincin-

nati, 1951; Boston, 1952; Los Angeles, 1953; Detroit, 1954; New York, 1955. At both the spring and the fall meetings, sessions of the Executive Committee of CCCC are held.

CCCC secretaries, who, besides performing their regular duties, direct a placement service at the national spring meetings, have been since 1950: Glenn J. Christensen (Lehigh University), 1951-1952; Beverly E. Fisher (Santa Monica City College), 1953-1954; and Gladys K. Brown (Little Rock Junior College), 1955-1956. In December, 1953, J. N. Hook succeeded W. Wilbur Hatfield as treasurer.

CCC, the quarterly periodical, under the editorship of Charles W. Roberts (1950-May, 1952), and George S. Wykoff (October, 1952-December, 1955), has grown from 100 pages per annual volume to 240 pages for 1955. It includes articles in the field of c/c, along with reports on other literature in the field and on related activities. The reports of the secretary, and of the workshops held at the spring meetings are published in one issue each year.

Since 1952, a standing Committee for the Study of the Professional Status of the Composition/Communication Teacher, under the chairmanship of Irwin Griggs (Temple University), has been setting the ground for a national survey. A pilot-study on status, limited to Indiana colleges, directed by William Sutton (Ball State Teachers College), and partially subsidized by CCCC, is at present being made. An interim survey of teaching conditions in freshman composition (the 1954 fall semester), dealing particularly with teaching load, and based on some 100 colleges, has been made by an *ad hoc* committee, George Kelly (University of Maryland), chairman, Richard Blakeslee (Wisconsin State College at Stevens Point), Eugene Grewe (University of Detroit), A.

³Membership in NCTE is a prerequisite for membership in CCCC.

R. Kitzhaber (University of Kansas), and James A. Walker (University of Maryland).

When by November, 1951, a written formulation of the aims and procedures of CCCC up to then appeared desirable, a Constitution committee, Glenn J. Christensen (Lehigh University), chairman, John C. Gerber (State University of Iowa), and George P. Faust (University of Kentucky), drafted a Constitution which was approved by the membership in October, 1952. Amendments to this Constitution were proposed and adopted by the membership in 1953, and again in 1955.⁴ The present Constitution

⁴See CCC, III (October, 1952), 17, 18; IV (1953), 54-56; V (1954), 40; and VI (1955), 59, 60, and 178-180.

of CCCC appears below.

As the first framers of the CCCC Constitution observed, it is our "hope that the Constitution may ever aid but never restrict the development of CCCC in its pursuit of its objectives."⁵ The extent to which various views and programs have a voice in the activities of CCCC, now numbering some 800 members in forty-five states, is dependent upon the continued interest, recommendations, and participation of all members in our attempts to solve our common and special problems as we converge upon these in our national meetings, our journal, our studies, and research.

⁵Glenn J. Christensen, Secretary's Report, CCC, III (October, 1952), 19.

CCCC Bulletin Board

"Fifty-four per cent of the mistakes in college writing are spelling errors, according to a sampling made at Colgate University. Punctuation accounts for 19 per cent, and the remainder consists of four or five types of elementary blunder which students supposedly 'mastered' by the tenth grade. Suspecting indifference rather than ignorance, instructors in the Colgate functional writing program (operated through *non-English* courses) began failing papers with more than three mechanical errors. There was a miraculous improvement."—*The English Record*, Spring, 1955.

The annual report of the CCC Editor, submitted to the Board of Directors of the NCTE and to the CCCC membership at Thanksgiving, is as follows:

College Composition and Communication, the quarterly bulletin of the Conference on College Composition and

Communication, completes Volume VI with the December, 1955, issue. Twenty-four issues have now been published; our growth is evident from the sixteen pages an issue the first year to an average of sixty pages an issue in 1955.

Material in 1955, as in the past, has come from two sources: unsolicited (and welcome) manuscripts, and papers and reports given at the annual spring meetings of the CCCC and the CCCC sessions at the NCTE Thanksgiving meeting. The October, 1955, issue contains the seventeen workshop reports from the March meeting; appearing or to appear are summaries of eight panel discussions from that meeting, and some of the papers, in full or abridgment, presented there in general or panel sessions.

Editorial policy has been flexible: to publish materials considered by the Editor and the six members of the Editorial Board to be of interest to college teachers of composition and communication:

such as material dealing with traditional problems, linguistics, specific courses, English as a foreign language, and the like. Liberal, middle-of-the-road, and conservative points of view are presented. Two regular departments appear in each issue: one, "NSSC News," by Jean Malmstrom, Western Michigan College, keeps us informed of the activities of the National Society for the Study of Communication, and the other, "Some of the Year's Work in College Composition and Communication," gives fairly detailed summaries—since no bibliography is available—of pertinent materials appearing in some sixty magazines not too easily accessible to CCCC readers.

Those who teach English to foreign students will be interested in *Annotated Bibliography for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language*, by Robert Lado. In 224 pages, it is Bulletin 1955, No. 3, published by the U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. The cost is sixty-five cents.

The CCCC Treasurer prepares annually a list of members of CCCC (as required by the Constitution and By-Laws: By-Laws 2, Duties of Officers, E, 5), and around January 1 sends copies to the various officers of CCCC. It is this list which is used in mailing matters of importance, such as ballots, notices of meetings, etc. If each member will pay his dues early, he will assure himself of all the rights and privileges in CCCC, including the prompt receiving of the bulletin and other mailed materials.

For those interested in better relations between high school and college, and especially in the methods and conditions of teaching in the secondary schools, three

recent studies are worth consulting. Each one costs one dollar. They are:

George F. Sensabaugh, George Hinkle, James R. Caldwell, and Alfred H. Grommon, *The Study of English in California Schools*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1952.

Paul Farmer and Bernice Freeman, *The Teaching of English in Georgia*, The Georgia Council of Teachers of English, 225 North Avenue, N. W., Atlanta, Georgia.

Foster B. Gresham, *The Teaching of English in Virginia High Schools*, The Virginia Association of Teachers of English, Farmville, Virginia.

With this December, 1955, issue, the three-year term of office of the present editor ends, and he turns the duties of the office over to a successor. This issue completes Volume VI (24 issues) of *College Composition and Communication*. The first editor, and the present editor's predecessor, Charles W. Roberts, of the University of Illinois, laid a solid foundation for the future of the magazine. The present editor hopes that the "story" he has contributed is worthy both of the foundation and of future stories. If that hope is not in vain, he acknowledges with deep gratitude, during his term of office: the prompt and frank advice and assistance of the various members of the CCCC Editorial Board; the constant encouragement and unflinching cooperation of the various CCCC officers; the promptness of the many involved in sending in materials from the spring and Thanksgiving meetings; and the patience and cooperation of those who submitted both solicited and unsolicited manuscripts.

All excellent wishes to the incoming editor, Francis E. Bowman, of Duke University—G. S. W.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
of
The Conference on College Composition and Communication

ARTICLE I

NAME AND OBJECT

Section 1. The name for this organization shall be the Conference on College Composition and Communication, hereafter referred to as the CCCC.

Section 2. The broad object of the CCCC is to unite teachers of college composition and communication in an organization which can consider all matters relevant to their teaching, including teachers, subject-matter, administration, methods, and students. The specific objects are: (1) to provide an opportunity for discussion of problems relating to the organization and teaching of college composition and communications courses, (2) to encourage studies and research in the field, and (3) to publish a bulletin containing reports of conferences and articles of interest to teachers of composition and communication.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. There shall be three types of membership: individual, institutional-sustaining, and non-voting associate.

Section 2. Individual membership shall be open to any member of the NCTE who is interested in any phase or area of college composition and communication.

Section 3. Institutional-sustaining membership shall be open to any educational institution upon the request of one of its members (such as the chairman or director of composition or communication) who is also a member of the NCTE.

Section 4. Non-voting associate membership shall be open to any member of the Speech Association of America who is

interested in any phase or area of college composition and communication.

ARTICLE III

OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers shall be a Chairman, an Associate Chairman, an Assistant Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Editor.

Section 2. The term of all officers shall commence thirty days after the announcement of their election, which announcement shall be made at the annual business meeting held during the annual convention of the NCTE next following the return and counting of the ballots.

Section 3. The Chairman, the Associate Chairman, and the Assistant Chairman shall each hold office for one year.

Section 4. The Secretary shall hold office for two years.

Section 5. The Treasurer of the NCTE shall be ex officio the Treasurer of the CCCC.

Section 6. The Editor shall hold office for three years.

Section 7. Officers shall be elected as stipulated in Article VII.

Section 8. The duties of all officers shall be those set forth in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE IV

COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Executive Committee

a. There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of twenty-five to thirty members, exclusive of the ex-officio members later to be enumerated.

b. So far as practicable, membership of the Committee shall be evenly distri-

buted geographically, and among universities, liberal arts colleges, teachers colleges, junior colleges, and technical schools.

c. Members of the Committee shall hold office for three years. However, the first general election to office shall be such that one-third of the membership shall be elected for a term of one year, one-third for two years, and one-third for three years. Each year thereafter the retiring members shall be replaced by elections, as specified in Article VII.

d. No member of the Committee shall be eligible to re-election to the Committee in the year in which he retires.

e. The term of a member of the Committee shall regularly begin thirty days after the announcement of election, which announcement shall be made at the annual business meeting held during the annual convention of the NCTE next following his election.

f. Nomination, election, and filling of vacancies shall be as specified in Article VII.

g. All officers of the CCCC shall be ex-officio members of the Executive Committee and shall function as the officers of the Executive Committee.

h. The retiring Chairman shall serve for one year as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.

i. A member of the Executive Committee who is unable to attend a business meeting shall be authorized to appoint a proxy from his own institution. The authorization of the proxy shall be established by a letter from the absent member to the Chairman.

j. Those members of the Executive Committee present either in person or by proxy at any regularly authorized meeting of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

k. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be those set forth in the By-Laws.

Section 2. The Nominating Committee

a. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members; three of them shall be the last three chairmen of the CCCC; two of them shall be appointed by the chairman of the CCCC from among the members who do not belong to the Executive Committee.

b. The chairman of the Nominating Committee shall be the senior past chairman of the CCCC on that committee.

c. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be those set forth in Article VII.

Section 3. The Editorial Committee

a. The Editorial Committee shall consist of six members appointed by the Editor with the approval of the Executive Committees of the CCCC and of the NCTE.

b. Each member shall serve for a period of three years, two members retiring and being replaced each year.

c. No retiring member shall be eligible for reappointment until one year after his retirement from the Committee.

d. Appointments to replace members of the Committee retiring at the same time as the Editor shall be made by the newly elected Editor.

e. The members of the Editorial Committee shall be ex-officio members of the Executive Committee.

f. The duties of the Editorial Committee shall be those set forth in the By-Laws.

Section 4. Special Committees

a. Special Committees may be appointed by the Chairman when he considers them to be necessary or desirable, or as authorized by vote of the Executive Committee or of the members.

b. Special Committees shall be appointed for a period not to exceed three years.

c. The period of service of a Special Committee may be extended when de-

sirable up to an additional three years by action of the original authorizing officer or group.

d. Special Committees shall follow the procedures established or approved by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE V

MEETINGS

Section 1. The annual business meeting shall be held as part of the annual convention of the NCTE. Other sessions may be held in the same city during the convention. The day and hour of all meetings and sessions shall be arranged with the president of the Council.

Section 2. Other meetings may be held each year at a different time as determined by the Executive Committee. These meetings, preferably in the spring, may either be a single national meeting or a number of regional meetings.

Section 3. A proposal to hold regional meetings shall be voted on at the second annual business meeting preceding the time of the proposed regional meetings.

ARTICLE VI

VOTING

Section 1. All active members present at the annual business meeting are entitled to vote, and a simple majority of those present and voting shall be required for action except as specifically stated elsewhere in the Constitution or By-Laws.

Section 2. In mail ballots, all active members are entitled to vote, and a simple majority of all ballots returned within the time designated, to be not less than sixty days from the date of mailing, shall be required for action.

ARTICLE VII

NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, AND VACANCIES

Section 1. No retiring regularly elected

officer or member of the Executive Committee shall be a candidate for re-election until he has been out of office for at least one year.

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall:

a. Nominate one candidate to replace each retiring regularly elected officer.

b. Nominate not more than three candidates to replace each retiring member of the Executive Committee, so far as practicable preserving the distribution provided for in Article IV, Section 1, a.

c. Secure the consent of all candidates to serve if elected.

d. Present the slate of candidates to the secretary by the May 1st following the date on which the Committee was appointed.

Section 3. It shall be the policy to elect officers and new members of the Executive Committee by a mail ballot, to be sent out no later than October 1st of each year, adequate provision to be made for announcing the names of the candidates, providing the writing in of additional names, and allowing reasonable time (at least thirty days) for the return of the ballots.

Section 4. The election of an Editor shall be subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee of the NCTE.

Section 5. If the chairmanship becomes vacant, the Associate Chairman shall succeed; if the associate chairmanship becomes vacant, the Assistant Chairman shall succeed.

Section 6. In the event of vacancies in the offices of Assistant Chairman, Secretary, or Editor, or on the Executive Committee, the Chairman shall make temporary appointments, effective until the next annual election, and shall notify the Nominating Committee to include candidates for the vacant offices at the next annual election.

ARTICLE VIII

PUBLICATIONS

Section 1. The CCCC shall publish *College Composition and Communication*, a periodical devoted exclusively to the special interests of the organization and not competing with any of the official organs of the NCTE.

Section 2. In the proposal and preparation of a monograph or pamphlet, the CCCC shall follow the same procedure as an NCTE committee. Any pamphlet published for the CCCC by the NCTE shall be so designated on the cover or the title page or both.

Section 3. The net proceeds of any publication issued for CCCC by the NCTE shall be placed in the CCCC account.

Section 4. Libraries shall be permitted to subscribe to the official periodical of the CCCC without membership.

ARTICLE IX

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1. Previous notice of a proposal to amend this constitution must be made by mail or in the official periodical at least thirty days prior to the submission of the ballot.

Section 2. Proposals to amend shall, by mail or in the periodical, be accompanied by copies of the amendment.

Section 3. On a mail ballot, and after the above conditions have been met, this constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the ballots returned within the time specified, which is not to be less than sixty days after the ballots have been mailed out.

BY-LAWS

1. Dues

A. Dues for an Individual membership shall be \$2.00 (in addition to the dues for the required membership in NCTE).

B. Dues for an Institutional-Sustaining membership shall be \$10.00 (in addition to the dues for the membership in NCTE which is required for the person at whose request the membership is to be taken out).

C. Dues for an associate membership shall be \$2.00 (to be accepted upon proper proof of membership in SAA).

2. Duties of Officers

A. The Chairman shall:

- (1) Assume responsibility for the functioning of the organization.
- (2) Preside at all business meetings of the CCCC and of the Executive Committee unless unavoidably absent.
- (3) Appoint all special committees authorized by the members or by the Executive Committee.
- (4) Arrange the program of the annual business meeting and assume responsibility for arranging any other CCCC program sessions during the NCTE convention.
- (5) Assist the Associate Chairman in making arrangements for the spring meeting.
- (6) Inform the Secretary and President of the NCTE of the dates and programs of all meetings.
- (7) Authorize payment by the Treasurer of all bills incurred by the CCCC.
- (8) Prepare a brief annual report to be included with the other annual reports of NCTE officers and committee chairmen for presentation to the NCTE Directors at the annual convention of the NCTE.
- (9) Supervise, once a year, the sending of a CCCC membership list to each officer and member of the Executive Committee.

B. The Associate Chairman shall:

- (1) In the absence of the Chairman,

preside at all business meetings of the CCCC or of the Executive Committee.

- (2) Assume full responsibility for the spring meeting, including appointing all necessary committees, and either through committees or in person complete all arrangements for the program, and with hotels, publishers, the NCTE, and other organizations.

C. The Assistant Chairman shall:

- (1) In the absence of the Chairman and Associate Chairman, preside at all business meetings of the CCCC or of the Executive Committee.
- (2) Observe and assist the Associate Chairman in planning for the spring meeting.

D. The Secretary shall:

- (1) Prepare the minutes of all business meetings of the CCCC or of the Executive Committee including the annual business meeting at which the election of his successor is announced.
- (2) Distribute these minutes to the officers and members of the Executive Committee and to the Secretary of the NCTE.
- (3) Notify newly elected officers and members of the Executive Committee of their election, inform them of their duties, and, at the annual business meeting, announce their election.
- (4) Maintain a permanent file of the minutes and other records necessary to the orderly transaction of the business of the CCCC.
- (5) Assist the Chairman in preparing for the annual business meeting.
- (6) Assume responsibility for the preparation and mailing of all mail ballots and the counting thereof.

- (7) Assist as needed with the spring meeting.

- (8) Assume responsibility for the printing of the official stationery.

E. The Treasurer shall:

- (1) Handle all financial transactions of the group.
- (2) On the authorization by the Chairman, pay all bills incurred by the CCCC.
- (3) At the annual business meeting and at the meeting of the Executive Committee preceding the spring meeting, submit a financial report and a report on membership.
- (4) Notify the Chairman if at any time the CCCC appears to violate the proviso that it shall not, without the express permission of the Executive Committee of the NCTE, incur any obligation exceeding its funds in the hands of the Treasurer.
- (5) Prepare, once a year, a list of CCCC members and send it to the Chairman for distribution in accordance with By-Laws 2A(9) above.

F. The Editor shall:

- (1) Appoint the members of the Editorial Committee as stipulated in Article IV, Section 3 above.
- (2) With the assistance of the Editorial Committee, assume full responsibility for the editing and publishing of the official periodical.
- (3) Report to the members at the annual business meeting and to the Executive Committee at the spring meeting.

3. *Duties of the Executive Committee*

A. The Executive Committee shall advise and assist the officers in promoting the activities of the CCCC.

B. Individually, each member of the

Executive Committee shall promote interest in the CCCC in institutions of his kind in his geographical area.

C. If regional meetings are held, the members of the Executive Committee shall cooperate with the local chairman in their geographical area in planning for the meetings.

4. Duties of the Editorial Committee

A. The Editorial Committee shall assist the Editor in the editing and publishing of the official periodical.

B. Individually, the members of the Editorial Committee shall endeavor to find suitable material and writers for the official periodical.

5. Workshops

A. Workshops having become an established and desirable part of the spring meeting, the Executive Committee may establish such organization and procedures as will, in the best judgment of that Committee, provide for continuity, a desirable degree of permanence, and a stronger interest.

B. After consultation with the officers of the workshops, the Executive Committee may from time to time re-

vise the organization and procedures in the interest of the greater success of the workshop program.

6. Rules of Order

The rules contained in Sturgis's *Standard Guide to Parliamentary Procedure* shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the By-Laws of the CCCC.

7. Amendments to the By-Laws

A. These By-Laws may be amended at the annual business meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present if no previous notice of the amendment has been made. If previous notice has been given, a simple majority of the members present shall be required. Previous notices may be given orally at the preceding business meeting, or by mail, with a copy of the proposed amendment, at least thirty days prior to the annual business meeting.

B. These By-Laws may be amended by mail ballot on the conditions stated in A above provided that at least sixty days is allowed for the return of the ballots after they have been mailed out.

Some of the Year's Work in College Composition and Communication

"How Motivate Student Use of the Library?" by Edward Murray Clark, Centenary College of Louisiana, *American Association of University Professors Bulletin*, Autumn, 1953. On the negative side, let us remind our students that the printed word, even in libraries, is fallible and frequently mistaken, and they must test, weigh, balance, and evaluate; that library statistics, such as number of books seen and read by students, are never an end in themselves; that the library should not become a reservoir for

plagiarism, as in the preparation of research papers. On the positive side, curiosity is the key. Let us make use of already existing curiosities or of fresh ones, and let us make library problems real student-problems, not just busy work. A well-planned "scavenger hunt," so called, can send a student up twenty-five or thirty library avenues. Through the research paper, with each student using an individual subject, much can be learned about bibliography, reference works, secondary and primary sources. If the sub-

ject is a freshman's major interest and is followed up in succeeding years and in other departments, such freshman papers may prove, as has happened, the germ of excellent Ph.D. theses and of life-long, enriching hobbies. In addition to teaching research techniques, let us also teach the student to think of the library as a place of pleasurable relaxation, to be obtained by browsing and thumbing and reading books beyond immediate academic purposes.

Sheridan W. Baker, University of Michigan, in "Are You Communicating?"—*American Association of University Professors Bulletin*, Autumn, 1953—presents the point of view of the "teachers of conventional freshman English" as against those who preach "Communication Skills." The difference suggested is that Communication emphasizes manipulation, uses a sliding scale of *appropriateness*, has turned away from the ethics which determine how we use our language, has taken a long step toward the inhumanity, the machined expediency, of mass living and thinking; what you communicate, what you listen to, are not important—you communicate to be a communicator. In the regular course, on the other hand, the emphasis is on written expression, on finding and expressing one's own motives and values against some larger scale of Good and Bad, as one deals with himself and what he stands for; a selection, evaluation, ordering, a putting together of the loose lumber of life. True, the writer considers his audience, but good writing to a very large extent is a one-way affair. A brief but comprehensive description of the author's English course concludes the article.

To Volume II, Number 2, of *Exercise Exchange*, George McFadden, Duquesne

University, contributes "A Writing Exercise," aimed at run-of-the-mill freshmen in first-semester freshman composition. The purpose is to overcome student inability and disinclination to revise their own writing. After a reading of the joy of "messing about" with paints in Churchill's "Painting as a Pastime," and a hearing, for its absurdity, of an ad on how any one can be a great painter by using a "paint a picture by the numbers" kit, the class is given a very badly mangled paragraph from "Farewell, My Lovely," with plenty of white space for "messing about." A few students can make only a few obvious corrections, but good students take another sheet and start all over. The last step, after twenty minutes or more, is to have students read their versions, discuss their improvements, and then read the passage in the original essay and see the possibilities realized there.

In "An Experimental Course in Remedial Writing," Cornelius B. Weber (College of Marin), in *Junior College Journal*, January, 1954, includes a discussion of the following procedures: investigation of influences (parents and friends) outside the classroom as shaping forces; arrangement of students in sub-groups according to declared or contemplated occupations, and checking of writing skills used in those occupations; correction and discussion of one another's papers; pairing students with others having non-similar weaknesses in writing, and changing the pairings frequently; charting the frequencies of errors; use of sentences from students' own writing, for exercise material; submission of theme topics by students; study and discussion of materials for subject-matter from *The Reader's Digest*; writing assignments varied according to particular interests or problems; and students' keeping of a daily anecdotal log, used for

special class assignments. The author believes that a pre-structured traditional remedial writing course would not have begun to meet the needs of these students; instead, such a course must take into account the students' backgrounds in writing, range of writing disabilities, individual psychological traits, and extra-class attitudes toward writing.

"Free Writing—They Write for Pleasure" is the title of the contents in the December, 1954, *Bulletin of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English*, guest-edited by Inez Frost, Hutchinson Junior College. As free reading, also known as wide reading, has become an important part of the Freshman English training in the public junior colleges of Kansas, so too has free writing become a part of the Kansas junior-college English program. "Free writing" is writing done over and beyond the usual assignments; it is done for pleasure, and often continues into the sophomore year, with students bringing manuscripts to their teachers for reading, discussion, and suggestions. This issue of the Kansas *Bulletin* (twelve double-column pages) published representative work done as free writing in ten Kansas junior colleges: a total of twenty-three essays or short articles, poems, movie reviews, character sketches, and short stories.

"Our Bandit Educators" (i.e., makers of objective tests), by Richard A. Hardin (Pre-medical Science Department of Yuba College), *Junior College Journal*, March, 1954, using as its central theme the idea of inadequate training of students to organize and express their ideas in a written form, describes, discusses, and evaluates procedures, of which the following statements are typical. "During more than two decades of pre-medical science instruction, I have found es-

say types of mid-term and final examinations to be better measures of student achievement than objective, true-false, or one-word forms of tests . . . We have conscientious English department instructors working their hearts out trying to train students to spell correctly, to punctuate, to write a composition according to the rules of rhetoric, or to do a little card catalogue research in order to compose a theme. Then, perhaps the very next period these same students go across the hall into a crowded history class, hygiene class, or just some 'class' to take an examination or a daily quiz. All they have to do to indicate the extent and accuracy of their knowledge is to put down a plus or a minus sign, write 'true' or 'false' or fill in one word after each statement . . . It is time that school administrators critically re-examine their objectives in education and the methods they are using to attain those goals. *I think they will find that the over-use of objective tests constantly neutralizes and nullifies the honest efforts of the English department.*" (Author's italics)

William D. Baker, "Why Is the Writing Service Necessary?" (*Michigan State Basic College Newsletter*, November, 1954), says that—so far as the state of Michigan is concerned—10 per cent or more of college students need extra help for these reasons: in general, poor college writers are not significantly different, or below average, in any one language habit or attitude, but in a number of areas; are not confident of their writing ability; were out of school slightly longer than their classmates before going to college; completed fewer written assignments in their last year of English in high school; took only three years of high school English (Michigan colleges require only three years of high school English for entrance); did not have their early deficiencies attended to because of

overcrowded classrooms. A survey of forty high schools revealed that poor writers came as frequently from large as well as very small, from medium-sized as well as small high schools. Furthermore, the study shows that "the following factors in a high school English program do not seem to make any difference in the score the students make on a college test of English usage: organization into college preparatory and general English sections, the attitude of the English teachers toward the teaching of grammar (traditional or modern), the nature of the composition text (traditional or modern), the attitude of the community toward the school (hostile or co-operative), the number of pupils per day or classes per day per teacher or the size of the classes." Perhaps these unusual conditions are due to the fact that "no one has been able to devise a means of evaluating high school English programs with anything like the care that is necessary to explain the results of these programs." All things considered, "it is not sensible to criticize the students for being poor writers. Writing is a very difficult skill and not everyone is able to master even the basic elements of it. If the poor writers are sufficiently motivated, they will have a much better chance of improving. Our role, then, is not to criticize but to try to understand—and to teach."

J. E. Norwood (University of South Carolina), "The Loose Appositive in Present-Day English," *American Speech*, December, 1954, gives numerous examples, or "variations," to show that the typical definition of the appositive as a single noun which follows immediately another noun, identifying or supplementing it, should be broadened to include the following: "A variety of parallelism, a loose appositive construction names or renames a noun, or a unit of a noun, to

which the appositive is loosely attached and with which it is, roughly, equated, in order to identify, illustrate, give an example, or merely refer to the idea by an abstract equivalent. It has the same referent as the noun or noun-equivalent with which it is in apposition."

In "Trademarks Might Be Skramedart" (*Inside the ACD*, February, 1955), Jess Stein discusses the history (from antiquity), meaning, and formation of trademarks, defined as "the name, symbol, figure, letter, word, or mark adopted and used by a manufacturer or merchant in order to designate the goods he manufactures or sells, and to distinguish them from those manufactured or sold by others." Formation devices include suffixes to a meaningful root; using initials or running together the first few letters of a firm's name; compounds and blends; purposeful and sometimes gross misspelling, to attract attention; reversals; alliteration; arbitrary combinations of letters; and product suggestions. Because of possible legalities involved, some trademark attorneys are not satisfied with the inclusion or definition of their trademarks in a dictionary.

"Our Freshmen Write a Book," by Sister Mary Aquin, S.S.J., Nazareth College, *Newsletter of the Michigan Council of Teachers of English*, May, 1955. Inspired by a symposium on effective methods of writing the freshman research paper in *College English*, January, 1952, Sister Mary Aquin's freshman classes decided to write a series of related term papers on a single subject, which would be bound and presented to the library as a book—all chapters typed on the same kind of thesis paper, the final copy containing a foreword and table of contents, each chapter ending with a bibliography and a vita. The result: "A History of

Kalamazoo"—its spiritual, cultural, social, industrial, and recreational facilities. Since then, succeeding classes have contributed or plan to contribute to the library their term or research papers, in book form, on "Nazareth College," "The Role of Women in the Modern World," and "Influential People in Our Time." For the teacher the projects have been stimulating, informative, and—exhausting, but well worth while.

A letter by Russell Thomas, Northern Michigan College of Education, "Another View of the Place of Grammar," *Newsletter of the Michigan Council of Teachers of English*, January, 1955: Grammar should be taught whenever there is a need to do so—even as early as the fifth or fourth grade. But the grammar taught should be "descriptive" grammar, not the eighteenth century "prescriptive" type (recommended: the first two chapters of C. C. Fries' *What Is Good English?* and the end-of-chapter references). For questionings of rules in grammar, grammatical constructions, or usage, various authorities are consulted: the unabridged and the historical dictionaries; the works of the historical grammarians—Curme, Sweet, Jespersen, Poutsma, etc.; articles in *College English* and *American Speech*. In regard to a relation of writing to a knowledge of theory, based on fourteen years' experience during which the Co-operative English Test has been given to entering freshmen, "We have found that there is a positive correlation between a student's knowledge of the mechanics of composition (spelling, punctuation, grammar and usage) and his ability to write acceptable themes."

Too long for adequate summary here, the May, 1954, *Illinois English Bulletin* (121 Lincoln Hall, Urbana, Illinois) contains in forty-three pages "A Study of the

Preparation of Present Teachers of English in Illinois and Their Recommendations for an Improved Training Program," by Charles B. Willard and John D. Mees of Southern Illinois University. It is of special interest and value to those who train prospective teachers of English. Questionnaires were filled out by 421 teachers from 132 high schools, which represented all sections of the state and all sizes of high schools. Part I, Preparation of Present Teachers of English, gives data concerning degrees, years of teaching, subjects now being taught, major and minor fields, semester hours in English (undergraduate and graduate), specific college courses in English, college courses in speech, college courses in educational methods, practice-teaching experience, and in-service training. Part II, Recommendations for an Improved Training Program, contains information about the following: most valuable college courses, practice-teaching experiences, in-service teaching experiences, college minor or minors, deficiencies recognized by the teachers themselves, and other recommendations.

To acquaint students early with the Classics, a new freshman course, voluntarily elected by its students, was begun two years ago at Wheaton College. As described by Curtis Dahl, "Composition Through World Literature," in *The CEA Critic*, May, 1954, the course "attempts to combine improving the students' writing, familiarizing them with various types of literature, and introducing them to a few outstanding books, half Classical, half more modern." Known as "Composition through World Literature," the year's course uses as texts Homer's *Iliad*, an anthology of Greek drama, Aristotle's *Poetics*, Dante's *Inferno*, More's *Utopia*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and poems by T. S. Eliot. The types of literature: epic,

drama, criticism, religious allegory, comic novel, and non-metaphysical poetry. Treatment—as examples: analysis of spiritual growth in Homer, theatrical technique in Aeschylus, political ideals in More, allusive imagery in Eliot. Topics for papers—imaginative, critical, philosophical, and personal—are based on the reading, as is the research paper, to which four weeks are devoted. The teacher's conclusion: "I am thoroughly convinced of the real worth of basing freshman composition on the best authors of all ages. Where could one find better models of form or more valuable and contemporary ideas for discussion?"

In "Meaningful Grammar," *The Use of English*, Summer, 1954, D. J. Ritchie (Senior English Master, Doveleys School), writes that a knowledge of grammar is useful in comprehending reading and in the revision of writing. To make grammar meaningful and to show that it is descriptive and can unravel ambiguities, he suggests that the student learn it through a system of "Bracket Signs," whose relative positions express co-ordination and subordination. For example: noun: [dog]; verb (run); adjective [blue]; adverb: /slowly/, each with a function of three ranks: single word, phrase, clause. The application looks like this:

[I] (saw) [six] [rabbits].

[You] (saw) [him] | (painting) [the shed] |.

"Because English word order and grammar are so closely connected, these signs do build up into distinctive patterns, from which it is easy to develop shorthand signs for whole word groups."

In his article, "How to Escape Teaching Composition" (*American Association of University Professors Bulletin*, Summer, 1954), John C. Sherwood, Uni-

versity of Oregon, surveys in some detail "the principal activities which creep and intrude and climb into our composition courses and distract staff and students from their real business." These include: the teaching of grammar (a prerequisite for successful writing, not the whole course); the teaching of usage; vocabulary-building; the teaching of literature (except of course the literary works which are taught as models for writing); the sociological approach to composition (an assignment from a book of readings on current problems, a bull session starting from study-questions, and then a paper—but "a person in a state of excitement will probably write vigorously and sincerely, but not necessarily with order, clarity, or logic"); certain elements of logic and semantics; reading (if certain precautions are ignored); communication, in its four divisions, with the difficulty of staffing and the dominant interests of each staff member. The reasons for the intrusions and substitutions are: lack of experience or ingenuity on the part of the instructor; the simplicity, definiteness, stimulation, and apparent more-usefulness of the substitutes. "Still, all these temptations would be resisted better than they are if it were not for the depressing circumstances under which a freshman writing course must operate. The staff is largely composed of beginners, who are often overworked; the students are a completely unselected group, often ill-trained and mostly reluctant. The subject, finally, is hard to teach and hard to learn, and it is extremely difficult to get satisfactory results in the short time the course lasts." Suggestions for improvement: better instruction of the composition staff for their jobs; more pride and confidence in the work of composition; and a certain amount of humility—"an English teacher ought to realize that he is not necessarily qualified to solve all the woes of the world in his little three-

hour course. We do not solve our problems by multiplying them; and why it should be supposed that an instructor who is not doing very well in eradicating sentence fragments will be improved if he has to undertake speech and psychoanalysis in addition is not easy to explain."

In "In Defense of Composition" (*The CEA Critic*, May, 1954), Hermann C. Bowersox, Roosevelt University, objects to Frank Nelson's proposal (*The CEA Critic*, March, 1954, summarized in CCC, May, 1955) that colleges substitute a course in literary masterpieces for the traditional composition course, on the assumption that freshmen can and will learn to read in this way and thus, without additional training, will learn to write well under their own power. The author believes that such a method is hopeless for the poor and average student, none too good even for the best student. "Close reading of suitable texts, though an invaluable aid in learning to write, is no substitute for practice in writing under critical supervision. Nothing takes the place of writing, having one's work criticized, and then writing again, repeating this process until one develops skill in composition and criti-

cal insight into one's own work. It is the proper business of freshman composition to initiate this process. The course may fail because it loses sight of its goal, or because it is taught by over-burdened and inexperienced teachers; but if the colleges will take seriously what Freshman English, well taught, can do, then it need not fail. Let the course be taught by serious and experienced teachers, and let other departments cooperate with the Freshman English staff by demanding writing competence of their students; then freshman composition can make a start in teaching students how to write. In two semesters, no course can accomplish more than this."

Replying also to Frank Nelson (see preceding summary), J. D. Thomas, Rice Institute, "A Fable for English Teachers" (*The CEA Critic*, September, 1954), makes the prophecy, through his fable, that if English teachers abrogate the teaching of writing for the teaching of classics, philosophy, literature, it will not be long before a devastating discovery: that since English teachers are no longer performing the duties which society expects of them, English teachers are no longer necessary and will be abolished.

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